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A Glorious Fortune

By
Walter Besant.



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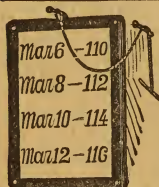
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A GLORIOUS FORTUNE.

CHAPTER I.

JOHNNY OF OREGON.

THE road, which is little more than a rough track—in the open parts, during the summer, dust; in the winter, mud—runs at this place through the virgin forest, untouched, for the most part, by ax, and almost untrodden by foot of man. It is a very remote and untrodden track; it has not yet even advanced, like a young plow-boy, to the dignity of corduroy; it runs along slopes of hills and across the valleys between them. When the way is clear of trees, which is not often, one gets a view of the blue Pacific far away in the west; every evening the sun sinks into it, making a glorious double rose of evening in the sky above and the sea beneath. Yet every half-dozen miles or so one may, perhaps—or may not, perhaps—come across a clearing or farm cut out of the solid forest, the stumps of the trees still sticking dolefully out of the ground, and the fields divided and staked out by rough snake-fences. In a few years, when the stumps have quite disappeared, and beautiful green things have grown over the ugly fences, this farm, with its backing of wood and hill, will be as perfectly beautiful as it is now unkempt, ragged, and unsightly.

You never meet anybody walking along this road, for it runs straight up into the hills, where it is presently lost; but in the fields and upon the new farms you may sometimes see a man at work. It is, in fact, on the other side of the Rocky Mountains, which seems a great way off to all except those philosophers who find the world so small;

in the land of Oregon, on the borders of the great Pacific, where, as yet, men are scarce.

The most untidy, most uncared-for clearing along this road was one in the wildest and most solitary part of it, high up among the slopes of the hills. It seemed as if the settler had begun with immense energy, stubbing up brushwood, sowing timothy-grass, hewing the fir trunks, and laying down log-fences, as if he intended to live a thousand years there, but had then lost heart, and so suffered the weeds to grow, stubbed up no more brushwood, and left his fences unfinished.

The house belonging to the farm was nothing but a little log cabin, gray-colored and weather-beaten, with two windows and a door in the middle opening to a narrow stoop or veranda. A little beyond the hut there ran babbling and sparkling in the sun (where it was not overhung with alder, wild-cherry, and syringa), quite the most beautiful little brook in the world. At the back of the house rose steeply a great hill, covered with oak, maple, hemlock, and fir; where the trees had been cut down, but the ground not further cleared, there grew every kind of underwood, bush, brier, and climbing-plant; the wild cucumber trailing its long shoots; blackberries as big as English mulberries; huckleberries; thimbleberries; yellow salmon berries; and sweet sal-lal; for this is the country where the King of Berry-land holds his court.

Under the trees, and wherever there is a glade or opening, there are huge ferns: it is a land of greenery and sunshine; a land where everywhere trickling streams make carpets of spongy moss, and the air is soft like unto the air of England. On the right hand, looking east, are the great mountains, and on the left, if you can see it, the broad Pacific.

High up among the hills at this time of year, which is autumn (or else the berries would not be ripe), the farmers and their families camp out—the girls sleeping in tents and the boys in the open; they shoot, fish, gather berries, and make jam—buckets of jam, casks of jam, hogsheads of jam—breathe as sweet and pure an air as there is anywhere in the world (except, of course, Dartmoor, Hexham Common, and the top of Malvern Hill), and presently go home again, ready for the winter's dances, flirtations and sledging and skating and fun. Also on the slopes of those

mountains live herdsmen, mostly eremites or solitaries, who doubtless meditate on things holy and spiritual among their cattle; and, just as the holy men of old were continually troubled by devils permitted to assume the forms of men or women—especially the latter—so these herdsmen are hindered in their spiritual musings by bears, gray wolves, and coyotes. And they do not go away in the winter like the campers-out, but abide upon the hills and endure hardness and frost, snow and hail, rain and wind, in their season.

The clearing and cabin of which I speak stood quite alone, and at least ten miles from any other farm. In Europe a man would be afraid to live in so solitary a fashion; in Oregon, loneliness is not so much felt, because there is nothing to be afraid of. Very few of these hermits in log huts have got anything to lose, and if they had there would be no one to rob them. Wayfarers by day are few and far between; wayfarers by night exist not; while as for ghosts, phantoms, wraiths, *dames blanches*, and specters, they belong to old settled places, and have not yet had time to get further west than New England; and have their origin in what we fondly call the Romance of History, meaning the murders, robberies, piracies, cruelties, tortures, abductions, fratricides, revenges, wraths, and violences of which, in a new country, there have been as yet comparatively few. In the matter of ghosts, the county of Northumberland, little though it be, would, I am convinced, prove a match for the whole of the United States taken together (with Canada thrown in), excepting only Alaska, which is a grisly and a creepy country, and haunted by troops of devils, in honor of whom the belles of Alaska blacken their faces—a thing done in no other country, and a compliment which must be received as at once delicate and unexpected.

It was a warm afternoon in late September; there was a feeling in the air as if, after four months—nay, six—of splendid sunshine, one ought to be satisfied and contented. Even of warmth and clear skies, there cometh satiety in the end, and certain hymns which speak hopefully concerning everlasting sunshine were written by poets imperfectly acquainted with human wants, and ignorant of the tropics. I believe an expurgated edition of the hymn-book has been prepared, in which a Paradise with occa-

sional clouds is dwelt upon, for the use of our equatorial brethren. Nature, in fact, was saying as plainly as she could speak: "I could now, thank you, enjoy a little coolness, with clouds and rain, in order to turn my green leaves into red, and crimson and gold, for the delight of humans. After that I will trouble you for the customary frost and snow; but all in moderation." Everybody who can hear the voice of Nature should immediately make haste to be in harmony with her. Then they will be strong and sturdy in the winter; hopeful in the spring, and brimming over with love for everybody, especially for those who are still young and beautiful; in the summer, they will be meditative, drowsy, and slumberous; and in the autumn, whether or no a man wears that blue ribbon about which they make nowadays such a coil, he should feel the vinous mystery of the season, and grow drunk, if only in imagination, upon the fruits and harvest of the year.

There were two men outside that log-hut on the shady side, which was the front; between them was a table (home-made), on which were cards, tobacco, a pannikin, and a whisky-bottle. One had a chair; the other sat on an empty keg turned bottom upward. The man on the keg was the squire or owner of the clearing, and lived alone in the hut. A man of five-and-forty, or perhaps fifty, about the middle height, and spare; he wore a long beard, and his hair was long. Both beard and hair were brown, touched with gray; he had regular features, which had been once, probably, handsome, but weak; and blue eyes, which wandered as he spoke, and were unsteady. His fingers were long and delicate; and somehow at the very first sight of him, one thought that here was a poor, weak creature, whose opinions mattered nothing, and who was perfectly certain never to get on in the world. He had a pipe in his mouth, and continually he turned upon the whisky-bottle eyes of affection.

On the other side of the table sat his companion, a man of much the same height and figure, with eyes the same color, only of a darker blue, steadier, not to say keener, in their look; his hair and beard were quite gray; his hands were strong and square; at sight of him the inexperienced, thinking of certain stories would have said that here was a strong, brave man, one of Nature's noblemen, turned

out ready-made, uneducated and ignorant, never, maybe, having read a single book; rude and rough of speech, coarse of manners; yet chivalrous as a true Castilian, honorable as an English gentleman, and as full of noble sentiments and lofty aspirations as the most cultivated Dean.

We know very well, and feel ashamed of it, that such a man cannot be found in this country of ours. He does not grow in the same soil as an enslaving aristocracy, whether of birth, education, genius, or knowledge. This man, then, would have appeared at first sight, and to persons of limited experience and unlimited imagination, a true nobleman of Nature's making. But there were about him certain outward signs and tokens, which spoke volumes to such as had wisdom, and could interpret small facts of evidence, and were not too eager to believe in the perfection of the human race. For instance, among other signs, his hands were white, which, in such a country, bodes ill; his eye was restless, his clothes were good; therefore, whenever wise (and therefore suspicious) persons met this man, or any like unto him, they would edge away from him, avoid him, and whisper to each other such words as "sportsman," "gang," "sharper," "cheat and rogue," or their equivalents, whether in Bostonian, Virginian, Kentuckian, Californian, or Oregonese; pleasant languages, every one, full of local coloring, and all remarkably like modern English.

This man had a cigar in his mouth, and sat on a chair—the only chair—tilted up against the door-posts. His feet were on the table; it is a graceful, easy, convenient, well-bred attitude, and was based by the original inventor on consideration for the comfort of others.

"Go on, Johnny," he said encouragingly. Note, that when one man calls another, without first asking his Christian-name, Johnny, this single fact saves the historian whole pages of character-drawing. Many a novel of "analysis of character" would vanish altogether if the hero were at the outset simply named Johnny. But then that novel would never get written. Pity; but then, again, perhaps no one ever wanted it to be written. And, again, when one man, not knowing another man's Christian or surname, addresses that man, from the outset, as Colonel, that also is a fact which speaks volumes.

"I was talking, Colonel," replied the other, "about the old days, and my wife and the little one, wasn't I?" he asked with some doubt, as if he might have been talking state politics, and had, perhaps, forgotten the thread of his argument.

"You never talk about anything else, Johnny," said the man in the chair.

"Why, no, Colonel—p'raps not. You see, mate, when you've been four years and more mostly alone, and a stranger comes along and stays a week, you naturally talk about what's in your mind; don't you now? I don't know who you are, Colonel, nor where you come from, but you're good company, and I thank you for staying. Make it another week."

"Go on, Johnny! Don't get drunk till the evening, or I shall have no one to play poker with." For Johnny's hand was wandering feebly and tentatively in the direction of the bottle.

"The little maid must be growing a tall girl now," Johnny went on. "It is nigh twenty years since I saw her last, and then she was only a babe of four months. Quite a tall girl she must be growing—almost a woman now."

"Almost, indeed!"

"A surprising baby she was, with a beautiful voice already. I was sorry to come away for her sake, I remember."

"What did you do, Johnny?" The Colonel asked this question without the least hesitation or apology, though it is a most improper and embarrassing question to put anywhere in America or Australia to a gentleman of European birth and slender luck. "What did you do, Johnny?"

"Nothing," replied the other man.

"Nothing? Not any little difficulty with accounts or trust-money—eh?"

"No," he said, not at all offended by an insinuation which would have made some sensitive brothers wince and kick. "No; I was always for straight ways."

"Drink, I suppose?"

"Not in those days, Colonel. I've only been used to drink since I came to the Land o' Freedom."

"What did you come over for, then?"

"Well, it's a strange story. Some wouldn't believe it. You see, I had a wife."

"So you've told me before."

"Yes, I was married. Why I got married the Lord knows; but I did. And I had a berth in a good House at three quid a-week—more than ever I've had since. We lived at Hackney Wick then. Quite a nice house we had, with two sittin'-rooms and three bedrooms, furnished and genteel; and for a bit my Matilda—that was her name—was as contented a woman as you'd come across, in spite of my ridiculous Christian-name."

"What was your Christian-name?"

"Never mind, Colonel. That hasn't come across the Atlantic, at any rate. It was a beast of a name. The boys at school made nicknames out of it; they called me the Lord Mayor and his lordship and—never mind. The clerks in the House found it out, and made my life miserable about it. A man ought to be able to bring an action against his godfathers and godmothers for libel; but I suppose the lawyers would get all the money, because it would have to be done under age. Don't you worry about my Christian-name, because you won't learn it. My Christian-name! When I came away, it was a comfort to think that I'd left that behind. The boys have had their fun out of me over here, you bet, because I won't shoot nor fight; but they never found that out. No, no!"

"Well, go on; one may just as well listen to your story as go to sleep. Go on, Johnny."

"We got on very well for a spell—about a year and a half it was—Matilda happy and contented, and feeling quite the lady. We had two seats in a pew at church, and the clergyman had called more than once. And then a dreadful misfortune happened, though we thought it was grandeur. For Matilda's younger sister, P'leena, did a great deal better than herself, and married into carriage company and the wholesale line, at Hornsey. After that, nothing went well, and every time her sister P'leena drove over to call on Matilda—which was oftener than was necessary between married sisters, and meant display—in her own carriage, Matilda turned yellow, and had to go to bed. Then nothing would do but I must have ambition. I must rise—I must soar; she threw in my teeth, as if it were a disgrace, that I was only a clerk. Why not a clerk?"

My father was a clerk; so was hers; so were her cousins, and her brothers, and her friends; so were all mine. She ought to have thought of it before she married me. I didn't want to soar. I wanted my pipe of an evening, and be left alone; soaring would have made me uncomfortable. The nagging, especially the day after P'leena had called, was more than I could bear. So I came away, and I think I've made my Fortune and done pretty well, at last." His eye ran slowly round his weedy fields, and unfinished fences, and at last rested lovingly upon the whisky-bottle. "Pretty well—though I had a good spell of waiting."

"You call this pretty well, do you? Then, Johnny, you are easily pleased."

"This is a sweet spot, Colonel, for a man to rest in; there's a pig or two in the sty, there's a barrel of pork in the house; there's plenty of game and birds on the hills; there's oats and grass to be traded for whisky and things. As for the wife, she's gone, and the little maid don't feel she wanted me, and I'd be ungrateful to up and cut sticks and leave this place. Besides, it fell into my hands providential—quite providential, which a man should think upon."

"How did it fall into your hands?"

"This way it was. I was going along, four years ago, alone and down on my luck, as, in those days, I generally was. Suddenly, at the turn of the road, I came upon this very clearin', and on this same identical house. The door was open and I walked in. No one in the house, but a whisky-bottle on the table, so that I took a drink. Then I went out and looked around. Presently, I saw lyin' under a tree, a dead man. He was quite dead; but he hadn't been dead very long, and must ha' dropped bein' neither knifed nor shot. First, I buried him under that tree there; yes, that's his grave; then I stayed here; then I came to feel as if I'd inherited the shanty and the clearin', the pigs and the oats. If there had been any money," he added slowly, "I should have inherited that as well; but there was not any. No, there was no money, Colonel."

"Did anybody ever accuse you of murdering that man, Johnny?"

"Nobody."

“Lucky for you.” The Colonel yawned. “And now I suppose you mean to stay till you send in your checks?”

“I think that is so,” he replied, looking about him contentedly. The sun was sloping westward now, and the hills and forests were lying in a splendid golden bath. “Why should I move on? What could I get anywhere better than this? I am boss. I’ve never been boss before. I get up when I like, I work no harder than I like. Before, I had to work as it pleased other people; here I work for myself: all the wages are my own. As for company, I don’t want any but my own, seeing that most of the company in this country is fighting and quarreling, and screechin’ mad with drink.”

“Don’t you want to see your wife and daughter, then?”

“As for my wife I shall see her quite soon enough, because, I tell you, she’s dead; therefore there’s no hurry respecting her. As for my little maid, I should like—yes, I really should like to set eyes on that child again.” He made a determined effort, grasped the whisky-bottle, and resolutely filled half the pannikin, which he drank off. “A beautiful voice she had.” His eyes grew softer and weaker, and he rambled in his talk, and began feebly to repeat himself. “Her mother wanted to be proud of her husband, but couldn’t, she said, because he was nothing but an insignificant clerk, and contented with that and his low friends. So how could she? Lord! I was always the most contented of men. Give me my pipe, I say, and my drop of beer in the evening, with a talk and a friend or two; what more does any man want? And pay? Why, they would have advanced me to five pounds a week in time; more than ever I’ve had since she nagged me into running away.”

“Then you did pluck up spirit to run away?”

“I did. One evening, when she’d been going on worse than usual, I put on my hat and coat, and wrapped up my throat with a comforter on account of the east wind, and I said, ‘Very well, Matilda, I’m off.’ That’s all I said. ‘I’m off, Matilda.’ All she said was ‘Good-by,’ and my Christian-name, which she never used but for purposes of nagging.”

“So you came away, and left your wife or the parish?”

“No, Colonel, I didn’t”—he said this without the least indignation at this charge—“no. Matilda had her own

money, left to her and invested in houses. Now she's dead, the little maid has it, no doubt. A hundred and twenty pounds a year the money was. Perhaps it is more by this time."

"Was it settled upon her?"

"Why?" He took another drink out of the pannikin.

"Don't I tell you it was her money?"

"What is the wife's is the husband's."

"You wouldn't say that, Colonel, if you'd known Matilda. You wouldn't, indeed."

"Well, you ran away?"

"Yes, I ran away." He laughed gently. "I thought I would surprise Matilda, so I took my passage that same day for New York. When I got there I wrote to Matilda. I said she'd be glad to find her husband was a man of spirit; that I was bound to make my Fortune before I came home again; and I told her where a letter would find me. She replied that she should think the better of me for the future, and as regards the Fortune I was to send it home bit by bit, as I made it, because she didn't believe, if I knew how to make it, that I had the pluck to keep it.

"I don't think," he went on after a pause, "that any man's Fortune was so slow of coming as mine. I tried it clerking in a store, I tried it as a book-agent, and a bogus auctioneer's help, and a traveler in clocks and reaping-machines, and a conjuror's confederate, and an actor, and a schoolmaster, and Lord knows what. Except a preacher, I think I've been most everything. Just before the Fortune came—I mean this little clearin', and the house—I had the hardest job of all, for I hitched on to a plow-gang."

"Yes, I suppose you must have always have been a pretty useless galoot. There's lots like you Johnny."

"Matilda," Johnny went on, heedless of these contemptuous words, "didn't quite know all that happened. No, sir, the letters I sent home would have done credit to Mr. Vanderbilt; for I told her that the dollars were running in so thick 'twas impossible to count them, but I couldn't send them home because they had all to be invested again. She wasn't so grateful for the news as she might have been; wanting all the time to take a better position, as she said, and if I was making all this money, why was she starving on a hundred and twenty pounds a

year? Well, poor thing, perhaps she would have found out the truth, because she was threatening to come out after the dollars, but she was taken ill and died—all pure vexation because I wouldn't send any of it home. After that the little maid wrote instead, and I kept on, just to please her, pilin' it up about my Glorious Fortune. But, somehow, what with this unexpected Fortune and the whisky, I've forgotten to change the post-town and the State, and I guess she must have left off writing."

"So," said the other man, "you've got a daughter at home, and you've done nothing to prevent your showing your face again, and there's money waiting for you, and yet you stay here in this cursed lonely place without a friend"—Johnny embraced the whisky-bottle—"or a man to speak to."

"You've been with me for a week, Colonel," said Johnny.

"And no money——"

"Enough to buy whisky and notions," he interrupted.

"And nothing to expect."

"I expect," said Johnny, "to go on living here for a thousand years. What do I want with change? I've been driven around long enough. Land o' Freedom, is it? I've never come across any freedom. What's it like, your freedom? Show me a bit of it? All I've seen in this country is a boss at one end of a bit of work and a beef-steak at the other. As for you, Colonel, you've had a bully fine time, I guess. Euchre?"

The other nodded.

"Monte?"

He nodded again.

"Poker? I thought so, and a difficulty now and then? Quite so. I thought once of going into the sporting line myself, but I concluded 'twas unwholesome for delicate constitutions. I dare say, Colonel, you've shot your man before now? Yes, I thought so. You look like it. P'raps you wouldn't believe it, but I've never even carried a revolver, and never had a fight. Born in England, Colonel? Said so, moment I set eyes on you. In London, most likely. They all come from London. Some trouble, no doubt? Jes' so. As is most often the case, and no need to ask further. For there's more deserves the trouble

than gets it, and if the jury was to change place with the prisoner, very often more justice would be done."

Johnny went on rambling in this discursive way, with an occasional sip at the pannikin, his guest paying little heed.

Presently he got up, and said rather thickly that it was close on sunset, and he must go and fix up the supper.

Two or three hours later the two men were within the hut, sitting with the table between them. On the table were a petroleum lamp, the whisky-bottle, and a pack of cards. But unhappily Johnny had over-estimated his strength of head, which now lay on the table among the cards. In other words he was drunk.

The Colonel, who seemed sober, sat perfectly still. Presently he rose and softly went into the open-air. It was a cloudless night, there was a perfect stillness in the air, but the Colonel looked round him with restless and uneasy eyes.

"What is it?" he murmured. "I havn't felt like this for fifteen years or more. Why, I see and feel London again. I am to give one of them a dinner at the Café Royale. We are going to the theater afterward. It is all just as it used to be before the smash. By this time I suppose they have got old, and there's a new lot, but they are exactly like their predecessors, and the old games go on just the same."

"Oh!" he heaved a long, deep sigh. "But it is without me. I am out of it—for ever."

He sighed again, and began to walk backward and forward, swinging his arms and cracking his fingers. He was living over again the old life. The rambling talk of his companion had touched some chord which awakened old memories, and these for the time maddened him. He was at Newmarket, at Doncaster, at Epsom; he was singing and drinking after a great supper; he was gambling at a baccarat-table; he was riding a steeplechase; he was acting with a troupe of amateurs; he was dancing; he was love-making.

"If I had money," he said, "I could go back to all of it. As for the old set, I suppose they are alive. They would welcome any one back again who had money to go the pace. Even if I had no money," he went on, "I

$$1-4^{13} \times 72 \quad (8)$$

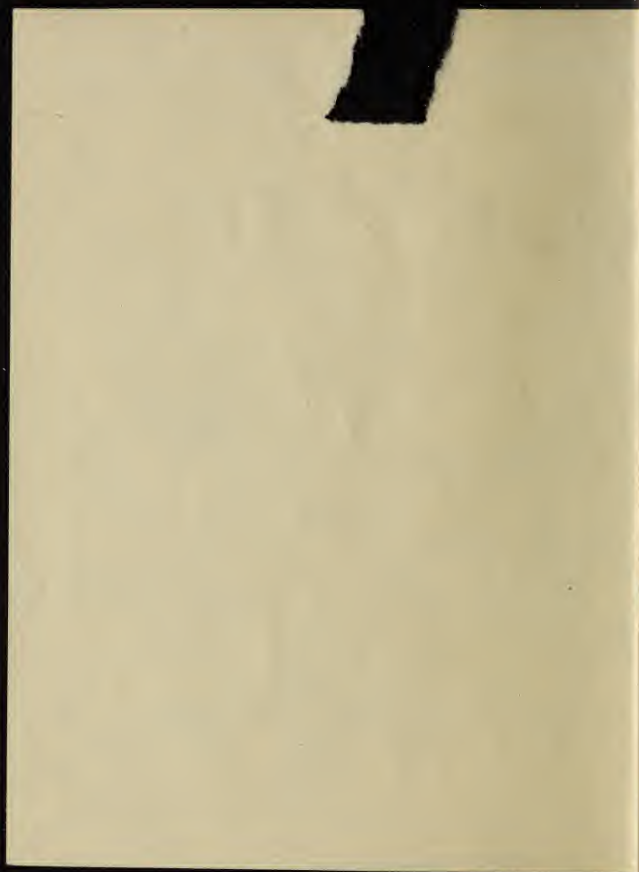
$$2-4^{13} \times \backslash^{10}$$

$$1-\backslash^{10} \times 76$$

$$1-4^{15} \times 76$$

$$2-4^{10} \times \backslash^{12}$$

$$2-4^{15} \times \backslash^{12}$$



might go home and pretend I had. Lots of men get on without money. Why not?"

For two hours and more he remained outside, while, within the hut, the drunken man still lay asleep, breathing heavily, his head upon the table.

Presently a chill breeze sprang up from the sea, and the dreamer returned to the hut shivering.

"Ugh!" he groaned, looking round the bare planks and comfortless room, his head full of memories of Club-land.

The lamp was burning low—he trimmed it. Then he took a drink from the whisky-pannikin, then he sat down again with the cards and began to shuffle, deal, cut, combine, arrange, and sort the cards with deft fingers, all the time looking an imaginary partner in the face, so that when the game should be finished, the stakes would be handed over to himself without a suspicion or any diminution of confidence. He alone is the perfect sportsman who can always land the money and never be suspected. But there are, alas! few of these.

Presently he got tired of his game of dummy pigeon, and began to think that he was tired, and might as well turn in. Now his host, in offering him hospitality during the last week, had naturally reserved for himself his own bed, giving his guest a shake-down of skins and blankets, and it occurred to the Colonel that, Johnny being so very drunk, he himself might just as well take the bed, which would be easier than the shake-down on the floor. A drunken man does not mind a hard bed.

The bed-place was a kind of bunk, in which blankets were spread on straw. The Colonel began to beat up the straw and arrange the blankets. Now while he was thoughtfully preparing a pillow, a very strange thing happened. At the head of the bed he found a small recess, contrived, no doubt, by the builder of the house, for a safe receptacle of valuable things. It was, in fact, a secret cupboard; no one would suspect such a thing in a log-hut, and, least of all, at the head of the bed-place. Secret cupboards belong to old manor-houses, granges, baronial halls, and castles, not to wooden cabins in Western States; yet here was such a hiding-place. The Colonel, with considerable curiosity, pulled out the contents and brought them to the table. First, there were three or four little

bundles of letters, tied up with string; they were frayed at the edges and soiled, because they had been a good deal carried about in the pocket. The drunken man still lay motionless and sleeping heavily. The Colonel untied the string and turned over the letters. Some were signed "Your affectionate wife." He read two or three of them, and smiled. Johnny therefore had told the truth; he had really run away from a nagging wife. He deceived her as to his success in the New World; she nagged him still by letter. The others, of which there were a great many, were written, first in a school-girl's unformed hand, but afterward in a firm round writing, clear and strong. They began "My dear father," and ended "Your affectionate daughter, Milly Montoro."

"So," said the Colonel, "I thought the man was lying. He's a poor helpless creature. Can't even lie. His name is Montoro. How the devil do these clerks and beggars get such names? And his daughter's name is Milly. What is Milly? Emily? Matilda? What's in this bundle? More letters, I suppose."

The last bundle was tied up with the greatest care, and wrapped in an oilskin cloth. The Colonel opened it, and changed color, turning suddenly quite white; for the bundle was nothing else than a packet of English bank-notes—ten-pound notes, eighty of them—eight hundred pounds! He counted them three times over. Eight hundred pounds!

As he counted them and gazed upon them, his eyes flashed and his lips trembled. Then he thought they might be forged notes. What on earth could a man want with good English notes in a log-cabin? He held them up to the light and examined their edges and looked at the numbers. No; they were good notes.

Then he remembered how the man he called Johnny—the Montoro man—had alluded to money. "If there had been any," he said, "I should have inherited that as well." He could lie, then, after all, this mean creature, and he had lied.

Eight hundred pounds in notes! And still the drunken man lay, head on the table, snoring heavily.

Eight hundred pounds! What could not be done with eight hundred pounds?

You may invest it in the Three per Cents. and get twen-

ty-four pounds a year for it, which is not much more than a soldier's pension of a shilling a day; you may buy the stock and good-will of a genteel shop, such as a tobacco-nist's or a fancy-shop with Berlin work; you may buy a lodging-house furnished; you may publish two or three novels with it; you may have your portrait painted; you may buy a really beautiful blue vase with it—you may do quantities of useful things with eight hundred pounds; but the Colonel thought not of these. His fancy quickly turned to London and the West End.

He stood there for half an hour and more with the notes in his hand, irresolute, listening to the voice of the Tempter.

Now the Tempter whispered this and that, but always came back to the same point, which was that with eight hundred pounds for capital a man who knew how to play might do very well in London. Why, when he—not the Tempter, but the Colonel—was a youngster he lost his whole fortune because he played with such men as he himself had since become. Eight hundred pounds! Why with two hundred he could go back to that old life and begin again. Nobody knew anything when he came away except that he was stone broke. Yes, he would go back again. He was fifty, and he had grown quite gray. That could be remedied. It was fifteen years since he disappeared from the West End—and now he could go back again if he liked. Heavens! how he should enjoy once more the glad following of the rosy hours! Besides, as the honest and virtuous Tempter said, it was not Johnny's money at all. He had lied. He said there was no money; it was quite certainly the money of the dead man. Serve Johnny right to punish him for lying and to take away his money.

It grew late. The drunken man slept on. There are never any clocks in log-huts until the agent in clocks has called. But I think it must have been midnight, when the Tempter said his last word, and the Colonel, without listening to that other voice, which said that though he had done a good many tolerably bad things, he had never done anything half so bad as what he was now going to do, and did he think that he could ever after it consider himself worthy of any respect or consideration at all? For to swagger and captain it around, to cheat and bully with

those who cheat and bully—ready at a moment to fight for your life—to be a ruffian, open and confessed, hath in it something of bravery which commands a little admiration; but to be a mean, secret thief—to reward hospitality with robbery—this, indeed, is different. But this voice was a small voice, and the other was loud and persuasive. Therefore the Colonel put on his hat, turned down the lamp, stuffed the bundles, notes, letters, and all, into his pocket, and stepped out stealthily and disappeared.

An hour or so afterward, Johnny moved uneasily, moaned and grunted in his sleep, discovered that the edge of the table was sharp, and his neck stiff; then he opened his eyes, and lifted his head, feeling a little cold and somewhat cramped from the position in which he had been lying.

Pretty well awake now, he slowly rose and tried to shake himself together. Then he remembered something.

“Colonel!” he said, hoarsely.

There was no reply.

“Colonel’s asleep,” he whispered. “Less go to bed.”

He threw himself into the bunk and drew the blankets over him, without the usual preliminary of undressing. As soon as he was quite comfortable, he addressed himself to sleep, but first, as a matter of custom, he felt in the right-hand corner for the recess in which he kept his bundles. Very odd, he could not find them. They were not there.

In a moment, he was broad awake, and perfectly sober. On his knees he began to fumble and feel everywhere for his treasures. Then he sprang out of bed, crying, “Colonel! Colonel! wake up!” and groped about for his matches. When he had found them, still wondering why the Colonel slept so heavily, he lit the lamp, and searched again for his packets. But in vain. They were gone. Then he looked for his guest, and he was gone too.

Then he understood what had happened, and seizing his gun with a loud cry, the robbed man ran wildly into the road, and rushed along the track southward. That was a great pity, because the Colonel, who felt quite safe and easy in his mind, and was not making any violent effort to cover the ground quickly, was marching due north.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE RIVER LEA.

THE River Lea is honorably known among fellows of the Royal Geographical Society; schoolboys who go in for their prize, and the makers of maps, as forming the eastern boundary of Middlesex. It is not, however, a river which goes into society, like a certain other river which runs along the south of the same county. This is to be accounted for in several ways: first, because society is a good long way off; next, because you cannot get at the East of London except from Broad Street, which is not a society station; next, on account of what may be called the personal character of the river. Its mouth is respectable, but homely, and a good deal encumbered, though of a lordly breadth at high-tide, with barges, lighters, works, and wharves. Higher up, it shows a sad want of directness and purpose; it winds about among the low meadows and marshes without ever making a bold push among such unresisting material; it continually goes off into three or four channels; for a large part of its course the prospect on one bank at least always terminates with a row of low cottages, built of gray brick with red roofs. Even the Thames at Cliveden could not maintain its dignity against that mean endless row of small gray houses and red roofs.

Yet the river is regarded with passionate fondness by all who dwell between Stratford and Hertford. For you may fish in it all the year round; and you may now row upon it for nine months in the year; you may bathe in it for three months in the year; and you may get drowned in it, and very often do, if you happen to be upset and cannot swim. On half-holidays and on summer evenings, there are as many boats upon it as on the Thames at Richmond. There is also to be found upon its banks the Riverside Jack, a creature whom, at first, it seems incongruous to meet so far east. The ignorant traveler would as soon expect a salmon in the River Lea as a Jack like him of Putney, Richmond, Chertsey, and Kingston, upon its banks. Yet here he is; using his favorite language

with the one favorite adjective which goes with everything, like the Spanish onion, or curry-powder, or Spyer's Universal Sauce; patriotically drinking the national beverage; loafing about among the boats; always pretending to be extremely busy, yet never doing anything, and still a waiter—"he also serves, who only stands and waits"—upon Providence for the casual tip; his expectations being pitched lower than those of his Richmond cousins. The Lea River Jack has a cottage upon the bank, green with damp in the winter and picturesque with dirt in the summer; behind the cottage is a garden in which he grows the most gigantic Jerusalem artichokes—perhaps that vegetable, in some subtle, unknown way, appeals to a poetic side, hitherto unsuspected, in his nature: here and there he has a ferry-boat, in which he will take you across for a penny. Whether business is brisk or slack, he always has a rod or two in the water, and as he goes about his chores, he still keeps one eye upon the float, ready at a moment's notice to strike the silver roach.

If you were to ascend the river from the mouth, where it is called Bow Creek, beside the East India Dock, you would pass, on your left, wharves, gasworks, and mankind, all the way by Bromley, Bow, and Stratford, till you came to Clapton; and all the way upon the right you would have a broad and dreary flat, which has many names, but is one swamp—the Great Dismal Swamp—once, I believe, and up to the days of Henry the Eighth, who loved hunting in Epping and Hainault, and thereabout, full of alligators, snapping turtles, and Wantley Dragons, or at least the Sussex kind, which were smaller. No one must contemplate this swamp too long, or on many days, except when there is a sunny sky above, with a west wind driving light clouds about, making alternations of light and shade.

It is not, I think, until one gets to Clapton that the stream becomes possible for those who are affected by their surroundings; above that point it is a real river, which may be rowed upon or fished in, and enjoyed as much as any other river in England, though with more moderate raptures. It is not so picturesque as the Wye, for instance; nor so bright as the southern Avon; nor so dashing as the Usk; nor so pleasing as the Tyne; nor so lovely as the Coquet; but yet it pleases.

It was on the evening of Thursday, the 28th of June in the present year of grace, 1883, that among other boats upon the River Lea, was one—the 'only one with which we are concerned—containing two persons. Had these two persons been old, or even middle-aged, nobody would have noticed them; but as they were both young, and one was not only young, but very pleasing for the eye to rest upon, people on the bank looked after them as the boat sped on her way. As for the evening, it was exactly the sort of evening which this homely river wants to set off its simple beauty; the wind was from the west and blew in gusts, but not too heavily; the clouds scudded across the sky, the air was clear; there was a lively ripple in the water, and a pleasant lapping and plashing of the water among the tall rank grass which serves the Lea at this part in place of reeds and water-lilies. The river was quite full and brimming over, but the girl who sat in the stern and held the rudder-strings could not see the flat marshy fields, because of this tall grass standing in the red clay of the low bank. When the sun got a chance between the impertinent clouds, the wavelets were blue and bright, and sparkled and danced merrily, like bubbles in a glass of champagne, or zoedone at the very least; so that it did one good only to see them. When a flying cloud hid the sun, and the wind came down upon the water, it became inky-black, and the little billows were as threatening as if they had been great waves, and the girl's eyes fell instinctively upon the young man with her, as if for protection. This was quite natural, because he was her lover. Any girl would have done the same.

As for her appearance, I declare that there was nothing at all out of the common in her face; and yet she was very far from being common. Women said of her that she was rather pretty, in their cold and critical way; young men would have found her charming, but she only knew one or two. I have seen thousands of such pretty, sweet-faced English girls, with the seal of goodness and tenderness on their foreheads; you may see them in any town of this happy realm wherever girls do congregate, that is to say, in church or at evening parties—whether most they love their prayers or their waltzing is a question which I leave to philosophers—they are as plenty as blackberries, and yet, though so plenty, they are so very precious.

This girl, Milly Montoro, was nineteen, or perhaps twenty; of her beauty it is enough to say that it was entirely conformable to the ideal of this present year, which, among other things, likes its damsels to be tall rather than petites, and perhaps prefers a brunette to a blonde. This evening she was perfectly happy; she had all she wanted; love, and plenty of it; youth, health, strength, hope, a modest sufficiency—what can girl desire more? She was so happy that she felt in a way ashamed, and afraid of showing her happiness too much, lest George should think her silly—which indeed she was not. She was so happy that she did not care much about talking, and would have been contented to go on watching river, and sky, and bank, and the face of her lover before her, without a word; she was so happy, in short, that she felt as if all the rest of the world must needs be as happy as herself; and the golden age with Roger Bontemps; the Ship which is bound to come home, but is always overdue; the Home of Plenty; the Land of Cockaigne; the Garden of Delight, and the Paradise of Sweet Contentment, were all come together, most unexpectedly, and had every intention of staying, and never going away again at all! A blissful dream, truly! Happy those who fail not of it once in their lives.

Along the bank there sat rows of anglers. On the Lea they are of all ages. The angler, like the poet and the æsthete, is born, not made; some upon the bank were old, old men, seventy, eighty, ninety years of age. Charles Lamb, fifty years ago, used to see them in the same place, fishing with the same rod, after the same roach. Others were middle-aged men, whose work in the City, though necessary, was irksome, because it kept them from the banks; others were young men, but thoughtful and reflective, who sit every evening, rod in hand, in grave silence and patience, while their frivolous compeers in cruelty collars and tight trousers, go a-mashing; others, again, were mere boys and striplings yet, already bound for life to the brotherhood, though no oaths or secret mysteries of initiation and reception were offered or required. Milly pitied them a little this evening; it certainly did seem to her that men at every time of life would be better employed in making love than in fishing.

“Oh, George,” she leaned forward and murmured low,

“do the young men never leave the banks and look for some girl, to make her happy?”

“You would like everybody to be happy,” said her lover, resting on his oars. “Why, my darling, it is not every girl who can make every man happy. Do you think any other girl in the world would have made me happy?”

If you think of it there seems a little arrogance and self-conceit in this little speech; but the young man did not intend it. What he meant was, that not every girl has the power of making the happiness of even an average, ordinary, typical, commonplace young man such as himself; he was quite a humble young man in his own estimation. He designed to pay a high compliment to his betrothed, because, so lofty being the ideal woman even in the most commonplace manly bosom, Milly Montoro alone, of all the women he had ever seen, reached this giddy height. She understood him to mean this, and she blushed and lowered her eyes, being afraid for herself lest she might fail in this point or in that, and so have to come down to a lower step, whereby she might imperil the affections she had won.

The early days of courtship are, to an innocent maid, as the steps of one who walks with trembling feet upon frozen snow, doubting the assurance of the guide who has gone before, and assures her that all is safe; going delicately, fearfully, pit-a-pat, softly feeling the strength of the treacherous surface, until, quite assured that it is safe indeed, the traveler may walk in ease and happiness. The very peril, however, lends excitement and pleasure to the journey.

So the girl listened, and her heart glowed within her to hear these words; and yet she was afraid. Is it not a delightful thing to feel, for once in a life, that you are a real angel, wanting nothing but a couple of wings, and bound to play up to the part, and to scorn the little temperous tiffs, sharp sayings, unworthy thoughts, with which some girls, not yet fully assured that they belong to the holy army of angels, do poison and corrupt their minds?

“Oh, George,” she murmured, “do not spoil me, or you will be disappointed afterward. Let us talk of our future.”

The young man, at the invigorating thought of the future, grasped his sculls with firmer hands, and put his back into half-a-dozen strokes, so that the little craft, astonished, and a little hurt in her feelings and rowlocks, clove the waters at racing speed.

I am firmly fixed in the opinion, and am prepared to maintain it in open tourney, lance in rest, and buckler (especially buckler) on arm, that the whole hope of the country in the future, its mainstay in the present, its glory in the past, lies, will lie, and has always lain, in those boys who do not distinguish themselves, or show any enthusiasm over the subjects which we commonly call *literæ humaniores*, or *belles lettres*—in other words, who do not “take to books,” but prefer the carpenter’s shop, the lathe, the Zoölogical Gardens, the natural history of birds, beasts, fishes, and men; who want always to find out how things are done, with what tools and methods, and then are never satisfied until they can see their way to improve those methods; whose heaven upon this earth is a chemical and physical laboratory; who really cannot be made to care for poetry—unless there is a rattling good story in it—or for a story unless it is real, full of adventure, and the fellow who wrote it knew what he was talking about; who have no feeling for style and no taste for the rhythm of verse, the fine aroma of an essay, the balance of a period, the pointing of an epigram. That those who do—bookish men—exist at all seems to those, who do not, chiefly due to the necessity for keeping printers occupied. But what a waste of life it appears compared with that which is wholly given over to practical contrivances, making easy what has hitherto proved hard, and cheap what has hitherto been dear. George Ambrose was one of the practical men. Look at him as he handles his sculls, with bare head and up-rolled sleeves. You see that he has a clear steady eye, clean-cut features, a mouth set firm, and a square chin. These are all indications pointing in the same direction. As a boy, when other boys read books, he made things, or inquired into causes. When it became time for him to leave school, he requested that he might not be sent into the City, whither all his schoolfellows were bound, but might find a place, if it were only as door-keeper, in some establishment where they made things. His request was granted, because in the lower valley of

the Lea such a request is recognized as not only reasonable, but as likely to lead unto things substantial. The only difficulty with a young man is to choose, for there are at Stratford, West Ham, Hackney Wick, yea, and at Clapton itself, men running many and divers trades, arts, and industries—those who spin jute, make cigar-boxes, creosote, patent fuel, dye, tanks, crucibles, grease, chicory, drain-pipes; with workers in glass, iron, leather, stone, lead, gelatine, tin, zinc, and xylonite; and money to be made in all these trades did one know how to choose the most likely. Young Ambrose made two or three false starts. First, he entered the works of a gas company, but speedily mastered the subject, and despised a thing in which the amount of knowledge required is so limited. Next, he went into a galvanized iron company, but pined for still wider scope, and finally began afresh at the bottom of the ladder in a great chemical company, which had to do with a whole group of things, every one of inexhaustible interest. He was now twenty-six years of age; he had worked his way up to a good salary and highly responsible work; he had taken his degree in science at the university in Piccadilly; he was a member of the Chemical Society; he had written papers and was already known; and he was so full of ambitions, projects, designs, hopes, and plans, that it was impossible for him to remain any longer alone, but needs must that he take a wife. Whom should he take but the girl he had known for a dozen years, who lived with his own cousin, Reginald Ambler—the best and sweetest of girls, and eke the prettiest? He, who had thought for ten years of nothing but the laboratory at the works, his experiments, his science, and his reading, discovered suddenly that he had always been in love with Milly Montoro, and when he proposed to her, which he did with as much eloquence, yet fear and trembling, as if he had been a poet of the first water, he told her so, and ascribed not to himself, but to her, all the merit.

“Milly dear,” he said, after throwing his excitement into the boat, “the house is perfect; no basement, no kitchen below, two rooms on the ground-floor, three above—nobody can want more. It’s only two miles from Stratford and one from the river, where we shall like to take a row now and then. As to the garden, you shall have the front for your flowers, and I shall have the back for pease

and beans. On Saturday afternoons I will look after it."

"Yes, George, and I will look after it every day. Go on. You will start every morning at half-past eight. Yes, I know, breakfast at half-past seven; but you will be at home to tea by seven every evening. George, we must make our evenings delightful. Sometimes you shall read to me; I will play for you; I will teach you to sing; you have got a very good voice, sir, only you want to be taught how to keep it in order. On Sundays we will go to church together—no more reading chemistry on Sunday mornings—and after church a little walk, and then dinner. Think of having you to dinner every Sunday! After dinner I shall send you for a long walk to shake the cobwebs out of your brain, and you shall come home to tea and supper. Perhaps we may have one or two of the children to tea with us; and, George, we will furnish the spare room, so as to give a bed to them sometimes, will we not? They are as good as my brothers and sisters, you know, and——"

"You mean you have been as good as a sister to them, Milly," he laughed. "Yes, you shall have your spare room, and put as many of the children into the bed as the bed will hold. My dear, I do not want you to lose your friends."

"No, George." The tears stood in her eyes for a moment, but soon cleared away. "It is bad enough for them, poor dears, as it is. They have been crying ever since it was fixed for August."

George showed no kind of sympathy with these poor sufferers, knowing that their loss was his own gain. This feeling very much helps to harden the heart; and, besides, he was ready to explain, if necessary, that every girl must expect to exchange her home for her husband, and to point out that it was not as if the young Amblers had any real claim upon Milly, who was neither kith nor kin, but had only lived with them for eight years or so; and the fact that they regarded her as their elder sister did not make her one, but showed only the extraordinary goodness of her disposition, seeing that she could command an amount of affection as can only be wrung from the unsympathetic breasts of the young by extraordinary sacrifice and ceaseless devotion. These thoughts passed

through his brain quickly, but without requiring him to put them into words. So he only looked at his fiancée and nodded his head, and she understood just as well as if he had talked a whole yard, or an ell or two, of printed slips.

Then the young chemist began to talk of his own schemes, which it would be a shame to reveal, because he is in reality another Edison, only as yet his plans have not become patents. He knew all the things which want to be invented or made practicable through being made cheap, with the inventions which want to be converted from toys to practical purposes, and the possibilities of certain scientific facts which are as yet in the limbo of unpractical laboratories. Heavens! what extended openings, chances, opportunities, and occasions there are for the young chemist who has got eyes that look outside his retort and can connect his laboratory with humanity!

"You shall find out all the things that have to be found out, George," cried Milly, as if every woman has the power of conferring genius, insight, conception, and more power to his elbow upon the man she loves. And yet not every woman, my friends; but unto some women is this power given, and then happy—thrice happy—is he whom that woman loves. The powers of women are as yet imperfectly known, which is one reason why they sometimes try to imitate man; and I wish I could be born a hundred years hence, when these powers are understood and developed, and be clever, strong, handsome, fresh, and frolic. Then would a great career await me. Perhaps—who knows?

"Oh," he went on, "when one thinks of the wonderful world which is opening out all round us; the instruments which register speech so that it can never be lost—fancy, Milly, all one's foolish words preserved for ever—the little machine with which a scene is caught in a moment and so never lost; the wire which sends messages, and the wire which whispers words; the unknown forces which our great men are reducing to order and obedience, so that before many years the reign of steam, and gas, and coal will be at an end. It seems as if there was nothing else worth living for, and everything outside the laboratory was a sham and a delusion, except the school which prepares the boys for the workshop."

"And me, George," said Milly jealously. "Am I not worth living for? Tell me all that is in your thoughts always. I know nothing of your science, but you shall teach me. Promise that you will tell me everything."

"My dear," he replied, "that is the reason why I want you to marry me, because I must talk to some one."

Again, he did not mean to be selfish, yet he might have seemed so; but he had never learned the language of compliment, and he meant that to Milly it was an honor that he should think her able to understand and to share his thoughts; and all, just as before, because he was a humble youth, who felt himself to be quite of the ordinary kind, but educated, which Milly was not, only that she belonged to the nobler kind of women who could, he thought, understand everything without education. Indeed, one knows hundreds of women who do, and will sit out the most scientific lecture, bristling with hard words, their faces as full of intelligence at the end as at the beginning; and I do not for a moment believe the wicked calumny which accuses them of abstracting their thoughts at the very beginning, and so remaining during the whole discourse.

Then he, in his turn, listened while Milly told him her thoughts, but bashfully, being afraid lest, after the great ambition of her lover, her own hopes might seem to him small. Yet they were not, because they were nothing short of an ardent desire to possess her life with ease, love, and happiness, and her soul with comfort. No woman can desire more, so that, in fact, Milly was most ambitious. It is true that almost every girl permits herself the same dream. While they talked, the sun went down, and a light mist rose upon the low ground and spread over the river. Then they turned, and George rowed gently down stream, the water plashing at the bows.

"George," said Milly presently, "I am thinking of my father."

"Why," he replied, "it is four years since you heard from him. He must be dead, long ago."

"Yes," she sighed; "else he would never have forgotten me. I will show you some of his letters. They are full of love and thought for me. He must be dead—my poor father! And to think that he never saw me since I was a child in arms. He was only a clerk in the City,

you know; and suddenly he resolved to go abroad and make his fortune, which shows what a courageous spirit he had. But no one ever thought he would have done so splendidly."

"No one ever knows," said George, "what he can do, until he is put upon his mettle. Yet he must have been a determined and clever man. Because, you see, Milly, if fortunes are to be made in America, the Americans are generally sharp enough to keep them in their own hands. At the same time, very often people do not see what lies at their feet. What did he go away for? Because I am quite sure a clever man can do quite as well at home."

"Can he?" asked Milly. "I thought that everybody who goes to America makes a great fortune."

"That is what they hope to do beforehand. When they are there, I believe they find life as hard, and money as scarce, as it is at home. There is a clerk in the accountant's office at the works who remembers your father. Says nobody ever thought much of his cleverness; says he was a lazy, easy sort of chap, who did his work and went home, and was happy. No one ever could understand why he threw up a good place and went away."

"Yet," said Milly, "my father said once in his letters that America offers such a vast field for a man that his money can be invested as fast as it is made. Sometimes he spoke of millions."

"Why, dear," said her lover, "if these millions could be found! They must be somewhere; but I am afraid they have got into the wrong hands; what splendid works we would put up! Oh, Lord!" he sighed heavily. "What a laboratory we could have with a million to spend on it. Think of the electric batteries! What experiments we could direct, and what an army of workmen we could employ!"

"It would be too delightful George," Milly replied, kindling in sympathy. "You should be the greatest man in Stratford. But my poor father is dead, and as for his fortune, that must be all gone and scattered."

I think she imagined her father's fortune to consist of dollars tied up in sacks. But we know otherwise.

"If," he said, "your father's money was invested, the investments must be somewhere and the papers in somebody's hands. Unless, that is, people stole them and

forged his signature. There must be all kinds of mortgages, shares, leases, contracts, bonds, all sorts of things. Unless, again—money got easily is as easily lost—the speculations proved disastrous. Come, my dear; never think of your father's fortune. We shall never see any of it. Why, with my three hundred a year and your hundred and fifty, we shall begin twice as well off as most young married people. And of course I shall get a rise; not to speak of the great things we shall do presently. And here we are. Steady, steady. Let me get out first."

They walked along the lane, between the river and the road. Milly turned back to look at the river when they reached the higher ground.

The romantic suburb of Upper Clapton stands upon a terrace, like Richmond, and overlooks the broad valley of the Lea; gardens lie on the gentle slope of the low hill, and beyond these you can discern the river winding about among the flat meadows; beyond the meadows, again, are the hills and wooded inclines of Walthamstow, Woodford, and Chingford; beyond these (but you cannot see it) is Epping Forest.

"See," said Milly, "how white and strange the meadows look with the mist upon them, and how shadowy the marshes lie beyond it. And look! did you ever see a moon so big and dim?"

"A sign of rain," said George the practical.

"George," said the girl, shivering, "I feel afraid. Give me your hand. How strong it is! If there was any danger I should always have this strong hand, shouldn't I?"

He kissed her—no one was in the lane, and it was twilight and misty beside—he kissed her twice, on her forehead and her lips, saying:

"Why, dear, what danger can there be? And if there were?" He clinched his fist and his eyes looked dangerous. "Come, my darling. It is past nine o'clock, and the Great Discoverer will be getting hungry. To say nothing of Kepler, Copernica, and Tycho Brahe."

CHAPTER III.

IS THE WORLD ROUND.

SUPPER was laid in the dining-room of Veritas Villa waiting for the return of Milly and her lover. I call it the dining-room, but it was also the breakfast-room, the sitting-room, the day-nursery, the play-room, the work-room, and my lady's boudoir; not because there were not other rooms in this genteel villa, but because the drawing-room was wanted for Mr. Ambler's maps and books, and the breakfast-room, which opened conveniently upon the garden, for his observatory, his models, his Orrery, his telescope, and his scientific instruments. If you belong to a great man you must be content to let him have the comfort. There are so few great men that this law causes little hardship. Besides, who would not willingly give up two out of three rooms for the pride of being an Ambler?

The boys, this evening, were shaping bows—that is to say, they were making things with knives—boys who never have pocket-money are greatly to be envied, because they learn to make so many things for themselves; and the girls were spinning. That is to say, Copernica Ambler, the only girl in the room, was finishing a frock for her sister Somerville, now in bed, and asleep, while her mother, with a great basket beside her, which never grew less in bulk, was looking after the stockings and the socks darning-needle in hand. Across her face lays the line of care which marks the face of the woman who has to make every shilling do the work of half-a-crown, and contrives, manages, and continually occupies her mind with the maintenance of her children. Who does not know such women by the score? It seems a waste of life, this giving it all to the boys and girls; but perhaps it is made up somehow—here or hereafter.

When Milly came home, followed by her lover, there was a general stir, with the sudden appearance of smiles and revival of cheerfulness, due partly to the immediate prospect of supper, and partly as the toll of affection exacted at all hours by this young person. For the mother looked

up and smiled over her pile of stockings; and Copernica, who was a sharp-featured thin girl of sixteen, who wore spectacles, held up her newly-finished skirt for admiration; and the boys shouted; and every one called upon Milly for sympathy with his work; and everybody had something to tell her, which was always the way when she came home, whether she had been away for an hour or a day.

"You must be hungry, George," said Mrs. Ambler. "Tycho, my dear, go call your father."

Everybody, or nearly everybody, knows Reginald Ambler by reputation; a very large class of humanity, namely, the Editors, know his handwriting, and cruelly toss his communications into the basket unread; few, comparatively, have the advantage of his personal acquaintance. He is a man now about fifty years of age; he is rather tall and thin, his hair, gone gray, lies over his forehead in a great mass, which he is always pushing back; his eyes are large and full; they are also of a light blue color, so that his face seems at first furnished with too much eye. When he is in repose, the eyes have a far-off look; when he is talking, they are quick and eager. His lips are nervous and his fingers are restless. Columbus, one thinks, must have been a good deal like Mr. Reginald Ambler. As for his manner, it varies with every hour, ranging from the depth of despondency—when an article has been rejected or a letter treated contemptuously—to the height of confidence, hope, and happiness—when he has begun another or has trapped some unfortunate into a controversy. And he has never been known to engage in any other subject of conversation, or think upon any other matter whatever, except his Great Discovery.

To-night he came to the supper-table and sat down with a smile of welcome.

"Milly, my child," he said, "take your place beside me. George, you next to her, of course. Copernica, my dear, this side of me. Galileo, fill George's glass. Cut some bread, Tycho, my boy. Kepler, some cheese for Milly and your sister. So——" He rubbed his hands and looked round upon his boys with the simple pride of a father, though he was so great a man. "Ptolemy and Mary Somerville have gone to bed, I suppose?"

"This day," he went on, "will be a remarkable day in

my history. I have noted it in the Autobiography. Children, I have now laid down the last of the great voyages round the world completely on the map. It threatened to be troublesome at first, but it agrees, I find—of course I expected nothing less—with my anticipations in every particular!”

“Oh, father!” Copernica clapped her hands. The wife smiled, her mind being still full of the socks in the basket. Milly nodded and laughed. The boys alone said nothing. Boys, if you come to think of it, never understand a father’s greatness. Many great men have lamented this to me, speaking confidentially. “Oh, father!” cried Copernica, “what will they say now?”

“They will say, my daughter, what they always do say. The Fellows of the Geographical Society will sneer; the Editors of scientific journals will refuse to listen; comic writers will make jokes upon it; map-makers and globe-makers will try to hide the truth; and the rest of the world, like George here, will pass it over without paying any attention.”

“If it were something in the chemical line,” said George, “I would listen; as it is not, I have not time for it.”

This he said out of subtlety and duplicity, because in his secret soul he jeered at the Great Discovery.

“No, no; and thus it is,” said the Philosopher, “that the greatest discoveries steal upon the world, and those who make them are unheeded. I have now laid down upon the map the route of every great voyager; my distances, my time, agree with his! Show me the globe-geographer who has ever attempted the like. Yes, my work is done; the chain of evidence is complete; I can at any moment, if I should be called away, leave the work of my life to the judgment of posterity. As for my contemporaries, they may, if they choose, continue to class me with the crack-brained enthusiasts—”

“Oh, father,” said Copernica.

“—who think they can square the circle, find out the site of Paradise—”

“I wish I could go and look in at the gate,” said Milly.

“—and transmute metals.”

“That would be only changing the currency,” said George.

The boys were steadily eating. They had heard this talk before.

"As for meeting me on a platform," Mr. Ambler continued, "they remember the victory over Bagshott, and tremble."

Bagshott was a Baptist minister who once ventured on a public controversy with Mr. Ambler, and had his head knocked into a cocked hat, a thing quite improper for a minister of the Gospel to wear, and recanted, and was now a fervent disciple.

"As for admitting at once and peacefully that I am right, and they themselves, therefore, wrong, that is, I suppose, too much to expect of anyone, especially of men who live by the propagation of error."

"A great deal too much," said George.

The boys went on with their supper and said nothing. The two elder lads, Tycho Brahe and Kepler, arrived at the dignity of clerkery, had long since plainly understood, and now made no secret of their opinion, that a Great Discovery may be a most calamitous thing for a family. Palissy, himself, did not bring a more rooted antipathy to fame into his home-circle than their father. Honor and glory are very fine things indeed; meantime, when they are abstract qualities, and therefore unproductive, and the heels of your boots are down, they might be sold, if there were any purchaser, for whatever they would fetch in the rough.

"Better, far better," thought Tycho, "for my father to care nothing at all about honor, but a good deal about making money, and saving it or using it to push his boys."

Such a father he would have desired, red of cheek, important in his bearing, pompous in his talk, as might be seen every day on Stamford Hill; a father who could put his sons into good houses, buy them partnerships, give them holidays at the seaside, with—oh, all the things for which these lads vainly longed.

Reginald Ambler is nothing less, if you please, than the Discoverer of the great truth that the world, so far from being a round ball, thoughtfully flattened at the north and south, so as to prevent the ice from slipping down and spoiling the equator, is really, as can be demonstrated with ease, a great flat circular disc of unknown thickness. What we call the Arctic Pole, believing that the world

twirls perpetually and ignominiously round it, like a fat goose upon the spit, is in fact a central circle of ice and snow, the origin and cause of which must be left for the discovery of future philosophers; round it is the temperate zone; beyond this the torrid zone; beyond this again another great temperate circle, in which Australia, the Cape of Good Hope, and New Zealand are comfortably placed; "neither het nor cauld," as the Scot said. Outside this vast temperate zone the ocean lies, a tract of sea indeed, immeasurable, desolate, without land or sail. Spread round in another, and the last, great circle, beyond the ocean at the outer-edge, is a Rim, ledge, hedge, barrier, frontier-mark, boundary-wall, or whatever the inadequacy of language permits us to call it, of thick, solid, mountainous ice. How broad is this Rim, whether it stretches out forever into boundless space, whether it is narrow, so that perhaps some day the voyager may hope to reach its limit, and to peep over into infinity, no one can at present say. From time to time ships, which have sailed south, have reported cliffs, rocks, and mountains, ice-bound, covered with snow, inaccessible, inhospitable, without life. Nothing lives in this boundary Rim except, upon the edge of it, a few seals, walruses, narwhals, sword-fish, polar bears, whales, and such sea monsters, who do not know how miserable they are. As for men there are none at all, and will be none till time shall be no more.

"What is beyond the Rim," said Reginald modestly, "I cannot say any more than the globe-professors can tell you what is beyond the furthest star."

This improved kind of earth requires an entirely new disposition of the heavens.

Reginald, quite early in the history of his Discovery, remembered this, and constructed, with infinite pains, a beautiful Orrery. In this, the sun, no longer an immense globe of fire ninety millions of miles away, or thereabouts, but a comfortable little fireplace, so to speak, half-a-dozen miles above the world, went round and round above the great circle of the torrid zone, wobbling to north or south so as to produce summer and winter. He pulled a string, and you saw the daily and the annual motion most clearly set forth. The moon and planets in the same way went on what seemed to be recklessly independent

and dangerous paths of their own, and the fixed stars went round the polar star continually. By an ingenious adjustment of bars, eccentrics, and curves, he accounted for all the natural phenomena—except one. This exception came home to him sometimes in the dead of night, and took the conceit out of him. He had never been able to account for lunar eclipses? Why not lunar eclipses? It is too much to say that his faith ever wavered, but he was worried and rendered unhappy when he remembered that his Orrery would account for everything except a lunar eclipse. But those moments, happily, were rare. Mostly he was content to gaze upon his model with a perfect satisfaction, to show inquirers over and over again how, upon a flat and stationary earth, all the natural phenomena, morning, noon, and evening, with the four seasons, the phases of the moon, the winter's downward slope, and the summer's elevation of the sun, can all be explained and accounted for.

Naturally he became one of the bugbears—there are always half-a-dozen living at the same time—of the scientific world. He wrote to all the papers, journals, transactions, and reports of the learned bodies; he offered to lecture, he asked for an hour—only one short hour; he sent his name with the offers of a paper, to the British Association, to the Social Science Congress, to the Balloon Society, to the Church Congress, to the Oriental Congress, to the Congress of Librarians, to the Congress of Headmasters, to the Geographical Society, the Geologists, the Society of Arts, the Physical Society, the Royal Astronomical Society, the Young Men's Christian Institute, the Sunday School Union, the Church Missionary Society, the Open-Air Mission, the Salvation Army, the Eleusis Club, the Grand Lodge of Freemasons, and the Congress of Cathedral Vergers, not once, but every year, offering to read a paper, show his maps and models, and reconstruct the geography and shape of the world. It is sad to relate that no one paid the least attention to these proposals, and, being now fifty years of age, and with many years' experience, he had ceased to expect a hearing from these learned bodies, any more than he expected admission into the Times, Standard, Daily News, Morning Post, Daily Telegraph, and Daily Chronicle, of the letters which he regularly sent them all once every year, after six months

of preparation. As for the monthly, weekly, and quarterly journals, he had tried them all. They would have none of him. And as for eminent men of science, there was not a single mathematician at Cambridge, or a professor of science in any university or college of the United Kingdom to whom he did not propose a meeting, public or private, to discuss his theories. The signal victory already alluded to, which he achieved over the Rev. Mr. Bagshott, Baptist minister of Hackney Wick, in a public discussion held at the chapel, was an abiding proof of his strength in advocacy and the goodness of his cause.

The school is small—it consists really of two, the Prophet himself and Bagshott, but it is full of zeal. They have an office, and an office-boy, in Chiswell Street. The office is a second-pair back; the office-boy, whose hours are from nine to six, spends his time chiefly in the street surveying mankind; the publications—tracts and maps—of the society are on sale there, but no one has ever bought a copy except a journalist, who once saw his way to a scoffing article on the subject, and so bought everything there was, and put the things in his pocket-book and went away; and presently forgot all about it. In fact, there exists a general conspiracy against the Truth.

“Astronomers,” said Mr. Ambler, “tremble at mention of my name for fear, but pretend to smile in scorn. They hope their system will last at least their own time, forgetting that to be found out after death will be more fatal to their reputation than to yield in life. In my autobiography will be found not only the ‘Short Reasons’ but also the ‘Argument at Length,’ and the ‘Questions’ which I have sent to every one of them demanding a reply, a platform, a public discussion, or an opportunity to state my views. Not one of them has given me either. It will, indeed,” he added, with a lofty sneer, “be greatly to the credit of the Universities, in the next century, that they refused even to let me speak.”

It was in this house that Milly was placed when the death of her mother left her alone at ten years of age. The reasons why Mr. Reginald Ambler was chosen for her guardian were unusual, but not without precedent. He had a cousin—many people have cousins; this cousin, Richard Ambler, a practical Ambler, an unimaginative Ambler, was a solicitor. Richard Ambler, therefore, on

being asked by the child's relations—they were unnatural relations, descended by the parent's side from a certain illustrious uncle of two—who wanted to put the burden of the little girl on somebody else's shoulders, and to find a home and a guardian for a child whom nobody wanted, naturally considered first of all which of his own friends would find the money most useful, and seeing that among all his friends and cousins no one was so perfectly hopeless, impecunious, and unpractical as Reginald the Discoverer, and few so poor, sent her to him; not for any fitness or special aptitude which Reginald possessed for the task of guardian, but wholly and solely that the child's money, which now amounted to a hundred and eighty pounds a year—house property having gone up—might be paid yearly to Reginald for the good of himself and his household. They were kind-hearted people, and as Milly was a willing, clever kind of child, they were easily, though gradually, persuaded to let her become governess, nurse, assistant-housekeeper, maker of puddings and pies, milliner, dressmaker, chaplain, adviser, counselor, and eldest sister to the family. "And, oh, my dear," said Mrs. Ambler, when Milly's engagement began, "what we should have done without you nobody knows; and what we are going to do without you nobody can tell."

Milly's life was so busy that she never understood how dull it would seem to any one outside the house, for there were in it no amusements, no sights, no theater, no concerts, no opera, no pictures, and even very few novels; nor perceived that she ought to have been treated differently, nor comprehended that her guardian was regarded by everybody as a lunatic with a harmless craze; nor knew or suspected that there were any enjoyments to be had in life other than those within her reach, namely, the children in good temper and looking nice, the Sunday church, a summer evening walk, and the daily cup of tea. She was, however, distinguished above all her contemporaries of Clapton Common by the possession of a romantic history. She was the daughter of a man who had made a most Glorious Fortune. Everybody knew so much. Nobody knew what the Fortune actually was, either in amount or in form, whether it was silver, oil, hogs, or railways; whether it had been acquired by rings and corners, by bulling and bearing, by lying, treachery, and deceit, by

contracts, by plunder and pillage of the public money, or in any of the many ways in which many tempt fortune and a few succeed, winning thereby the universal respect of their fellow-creatures. Mr. Montoro—no one ever spoke of him without the honorable prefix—had been once a clerk in the City. Somewhere about twenty years ago he threw up his place and went away to seek his Fortune. And he found it. Matter of common knowledge that he found it; that he had sent none of it home was also known; and that for four or five years his daughter had heard nothing from him, whence it might be concluded that he was dead. And the great Fortune—where was that? Why, the United States of America being so big, one might as well look for a lost needle in Hyde Park as for a lost fortune in a country popularly believed to consist entirely of men who have made enormous fortunes. No doubt it was lying somewhere packed up, and would be lost for want of someone to claim it. So that Milly was not regarded as an heiress so much as the daughter of a man who had distinguished himself. But still there was always the chance that her father might turn up, his Fortune in his hand. The thought that her father might be still alive and might yet return never left the girl. She had his letters in her desk, which she read until she knew them by heart, both those to her mother and those to herself. The former were curiously cold and constrained. He was prospering exceedingly, but he did not explain how. He was richer already than any of the people they had known at home; he was waiting an opportunity to realize some of his gains and enable her to keep her carriage; and so on. To herself the letters were full of affection and tenderness, speaking of a time when he would either go home or have his daughter with him. He spoke of his continued success, but without the least hint of his occupation, and his address was always changing; so that whatever it was, his work took him from one State to another.

The girl constructed her ideal father from the letters. He must be a gentle and quiet creature because her mother had always spoken of him as a peaceful man who gave no offense to any, and loved tranquillity; yet he must be a man of great courage thus to have forced his way to the front, in a strange country, with no friends to help him. He must be a man of fine manner and noble mind, be-

cause his letters were full of the most admirable sentiments, and he must be a father whom any girl would be too ready to love, so full of tenderness was he himself. The letters which this poor English waif and stray wrote twice or three times every year to his daughter were in fact to him, though they were loaded with falsehoods, the one thing which kept up his soul. He consorted with gangs of the roughest; his work was the lowest; yet he had to console him the letters of his child, fresh, innocent, confiding; and he had, to lift himself out of the mire, to make up in reply some answer which should make the girl happy about him; and in order to do that he was forced to imagine himself back in civilized life, a gentleman. If you come to think of it, there wants a good deal of imagination for an unsuccessful emigrant, sunk as low as can well be, to make people at home believe that he is rolling in prosperity. It grew harder every year for the poor man, but still he persevered, until he fell in with his great stroke of luck, and became a landowner in Oregon. Then, his life being now easy, and even assured, and the whisky-bottle always handy, his brain began to deteriorate, and he wrote no more letters. While he was a vagrant journeyman, ready to do anything, he would imagine, conceive, and describe. The moment he became settled, the fountain of fancy dried up, and he could picture no more. Therefore, the drop being too great from a millionaire to a settler in a half-cleared plot of forest-ground, with a log-hut and a couple of blankets, he ceased to send any more letters. He was one of those who have been ruined by prosperity. Had he still continued one of a plow-gang, or a herdsman, or a hand on a steamer, or a picker-up of odd jobs, his daughter would have continued to receive those letters which for so many years had been the chief happiness of her life.

But he would come home some day, she said—he would come home.

Thus she grew up a sweet and natural girl, careless of her own beauty, because she was always thinking about the children, till she was past nineteen years of age, and then love came to her in the shape of a brave young fellow—strong, ambitious, obstinately resolved to get on, and quite certain to expect of her in return as much as he would give to her. Then, the practical business of

life thus suddenly opened out before her, she left off dreaming about her father, finding henceforth no room for anyone in her dreams except her sweetheart. To be sure, she had known him ever since she had joined the Ambler household, because he was a cousin of Reginald Ambler; but then to see a young fellow occasionally in the house, and to be wooed by him, are very different things. And how that love gradually came about, I am not going to tell, because it is so simple a process that all the world may imagine it. Besides, as the princess said to the one-eyed Calendar, "This is not a common love-story."

Now, on this evening, the supper was, as has been indicated, a meal of unusually cheerful character, not on account of George's presence, because he was there nearly every evening, but for certain unknown and inscrutable reasons which act upon the family atmosphere, and can only be judged by their effects, and make it, in fact, like the climate of this country, variable—sometimes cloudy, sometimes misty, and always impossible to be foretold. Everyone who belongs to a large family must know the uncertainty of the general temper, however that of the individual (meaning oneself) may be depended upon. This evening the dining-room of Veritas Villa seemed a little heaven of cheerfulness. Even the two elder boys—Kepler, who was eighteen, and Tycho, who was sixteen—listened to their father without open scorn or impatience, though they had the firmest belief that his talk was unmitigated nonsense. If anyone had held a curved hand to his ear he would probably have heard distinctly a kind of purr of satisfaction and content. Perhaps on a really fine evening in June, when it is light at nine o'clock, and the windows can be kept open, and the roses are already in blossom, everyone ought to be in a good temper. But then fine weather does not always make fine tempers.

"I have never," the Discoverer went on—he had been talking ever since the last remark of his, quoted a few columns back, but we had other things to talk about and have not followed him—"I have never," he was saying, "thought less of a man for being wrong, so long as his mind is open to truth, and he has the courage of his opinions. Thus, I have named the children after those who

were my forerunners, though they did not, it is true, prepare the way for my discoveries, but quite to the contrary. Ptolemy, Kepler, Tycho Brahe, Galileo, Copernicus, are names which will always be held in honor, long, long after that of Reginald Ambler has been elevated to the highest place in the roll of honor. This, my children, may not be till after I am dead and gone; yet it will come in the lifetime of some among you. I say no more, but that three letters of inquiry have been received at the Society's offices this week. Already the cause spreads rapidly; but nothing, nothing to the wildfire speed with which it will be taken up when once the people have been allowed to see and judge for themselves."

He drank off a whole glass of beer, paused, meditated for a few moments, with his finger to his forehead, pushed back his hair, and was about to proceed, when there were sounds of wheels in the road, and a ring at the bell of the outer gate. And this was so rare an event—indeed an event hitherto unheard of—that everybody jumped in his chair and looked at each other."

"It is perhaps another anxious inquirer," said the philosopher. "Can one of the Cambridge professors be going to accept the challenge?"

"It is the Parcels Delivery Company," said Kepler.

"It is Milly's great Fortune," said Copernica, "coming home from America in a box."

"It is——" began another, but stopped, because the door opened and the servant—they had but one—put in her head.

"Please, m'm," she said, "there's a gentleman wants to see Miss Milly."

They looked at each other in something like consternation. A gentleman wanting Milly! What gentleman? Who could it be?

Milly turned very pale, and took George's hand.

"Come with me, George," she said.

"If it is—if it is——" Mrs. Ambler could not say "your father." "Whoever it is, I think, Reginald, as Milly's guardian, you or both of us ought to go with her too."

"Certainly," said Mr. Ambler. "Shall we show him into the map-room? The contemplation of the charts may lead him round——"

"He shall come in here," said the mother, looking round. "Whoever it is, he shall see Milly in the ordinary way, with the children round her, bless her! Kepler, my dear, ask the gentleman to come in."

It was now nearly ten. Outside it was still twilight, but in the room there was a pleasant obscurity. Milly stood at the table, her back to the window, George beside her, holding her hand. Everybody had risen in expectation. The tears were already in Copernica's eyes, and making her spectacles dim out of pure sympathy. The family atmosphere was changed. Calm and serenity were vanished; in their place the beating heart, the quickened pulse, the agitation and oppression which fill the mind before a thunderstorm.

Then the "gentleman" came into the room. In the dim twilight Milly saw a tall figure in the doorway.

"Is there here," he said, "a young lady named Milly Montoro?"

"I am her guardian," replied Mr. Ambler. "My name is Reginald Ambler. I am, as you may be aware, the Discoverer, under Providence, of the true astronomy. Miss Montoro is here. Have you any message or parcel, or—or anything for her?"

"If you will light your gas," said the stranger, "I will tell you."

One of the boys lit the burners. They saw now a gentleman with a heavy brown mustache, no beard or whiskers, strongly marked features, and eyes very keen, hard, and bright. He was well dressed, and looked as if he was, in City language, a substantial, or "warm" man, yet not in the least like any City man they had ever encountered. He looked round the room, resting his eye first for a moment on Copernica, but, as if dissatisfied with the spectacles, he turned to Milly. Then he stepped forward and held out his hand, saying coldly, "I suppose you are my daughter!"

She sprang forward, and fell into his arms with a cry of surprise and joy. Her father at last!

Her father! Then her Fortune had come home. The boys looked straight before them, with tightness in their throats. Copernica wept silently; the mother wept loudly. Only George seemed discontented.

"My daughter," the stranger repeated coldly, and dis-

engaging himself from her arms without so much as kissing her. "Yes, it is natural after all these years. I suppose I might have expected to be hugged. That will do, Milly. I suppose I must call you Milly. Of course. I was hardly prepared, I must own, Mr. Ab—Ambler, for such a—in fact I could not have believed that you were so well-grown a girl. However—yes, my dear, it is your father. You did not expect to see me, perhaps?"

"You have been silent for four long years," she replied. "How could I——"

"True, true; we will talk of that another time. You have been living here, I suppose. And this is Mr. Ambler; and—ah!—Mrs. Ambler; and—ah!—the family Amblers."

"These," said Milly, "are the kind friends, and the boys and girls I have told you of in my letters so often."

"You have, my—my dear." Strange that the adjective should seem so hard to say. "You certainly have. Your letters are all in my pocket at this moment. They have never left me, I assure you."

"Oh, father!"

"Never, my—ahem!—my dear. I have read some of them—ahem!—more than once."

Between having letters always in your pocket and reading them more than once there seems a wide gap.

Milly's eyes dropped.

"Well, my daughter?" He hesitated and looked round. "As it is evening, and a little late, and I have to get back to the West End, and—and—is there anything you wish to say before I go? Of course we shall meet again to-morrow or next day, or—or—in fact, you will study your own convenience. As regards future arrangements, I do not suppose that I shall go back to America for a few weeks; but of that we can speak afterward. So, for the present——"

"Stay, father, one moment!" The girl took George's hand, while the rest looked at each other bewildered. Was this the kind of meeting one would dream of between father and daughter after twenty years' separation? "This," said Milly, "is George Ambrose, my lover. We are going to be married."

Mr. Montoro slowly put up a pair of eye-glasses, and looked at George from head to foot.

"Not so fast," he said, not so fast. You have a father, whose permission—— May I ask you, sir, what is your profession?"

"I am at present a clerk in a chemical works," said George, hot and red.

"A clerk—a mere clerk! My—ahem!—my daughter, we will speak of this afterward."

"You were a clerk yourself once," said George in a quiet rage, while the two elder boys murmured, because they too were clerks.

"What the devil do you mean by that?" asked Mr. Montoro fiercely. "How dare you say that I was once a clerk?"

"If you are ashamed of it," said George, "I shall certainly not remind you of the fact again. I am not ashamed of beginning as a clerk. Perhaps I shall rise out of it."

Here was a pretty beginning. Milly looked in consternation from her father to her lover. Why did her father fall into such sudden and violent wrath? Everybody knew he had been a clerk, and had gone away and made his Fortune. However, he recovered as quickly, and deigning no further reply to the unlucky lover turned to his daughter.

"We will talk, Milly," he said with a coldness of voice which fell upon her heart like ice—"we will talk of these things another time. Meantime I have found out where you live, which is a disgusting distance from anywhere. I shall probably call here again to-morrow afternoon. Meantime—ah!—good-night."

He gave her his hand without offering to kiss her, and retired without another word.

Mr. Ambler had the presence of mind to follow him and catch him by the arm.

"Pardon me, sir, one word, if only to satisfy the neighbors. Your Glorious Fortune, of which we have heard so much, is it—is it safe? Is all well with it?"

"Quite safe," Mr. Montoro replied. "It is," he added with a grin, "just exactly as safe as it always has been—on as sound a basis, and as gigantic. I thought you would want to know first thing about the Fortune. And as to neighbors, be good enough to tell them that I don't want to know 'em, and I won't know 'em, and I won't see 'em."

What I am going to do about Milly I cannot just yet tell you; perhaps I have not made up my mind. But hark ye, Mr. Addlepatc, or whatever your name is——”

“Ambler, sir—Reginald Ambler, the Discoverer of——”

“Remember, I will have no neighbors here. Perhaps I may have been a clerk myself in the old days. Perhaps I am not too anxious to have them recalled. Keep them out of my way, do you hear?”

He opened the door, walked noisily down the gravel, got into his cab, and drove away.

“Oh, good gracious!” cried Mrs. Ambler. “My poor—poor child! Did anyone ever hear or see such a thing?”

“Oh, poor Milly!” said Copernica, kissing her, until the spectacles scratched her cheek.

“But the letters he used to write!” said Milly. “I can not understand it. What has changed him? Not one kind word! and the letters so full of sweet things! And—oh, George!”

“Never mind me, dear,” said George hoarsely.

“But I must mind you. You are to come first, not my father. He must not upset my life. Yes, I know about the fifth commandment, but that can’t be meant for fathers who stay away twenty years.” She looked determined. “Go now, George, it is getting late. Go, dear, and trust me.”

“I wish,” said Mr. Ambler, “I do wish that he had been shown first into the map-room. If he had understood, even a little, under what a roof his daughter had been brought up, he would have approached the question of—of George—with a little more feeling. I say nothing about the Truth. That may, or may not, come afterward. He looked as if he might become an Inquirer. But we should have impressed him first. We did wrong. We should have impressed him first of all, with the maps, the charts, and the working models.

CHAPTER IV.

A WARM WELCOME.

AN interval of fifteen years for moral refreshment is a good spell. Unfortunately, whether the time be passed in the neighborhood of Weymouth or on Dartmoor, or in the new world, the patient, on his return to society,

generally finds that his finer qualities, to remember which has probably been his chief comfort in exile, are all clean forgotten, and only those little episodes which necessitated his departure are now remembered.

The extraordinary vitality of disagreeable things has never yet been treated seriously. A man shall be your most delightful companion for years, your bosom friend and confidant; he then, perhaps, forges your name—only once; steals your money—is only found out once; cheats at cards—and is only once detected; embezzles his employer's money—but is only once discovered, and therefore is compelled to seek retirement for a while. On his return it is excessively annoying to find that nothing is remembered except the misfortune which separated him from his friends.

In a better state of things the patient will be welcomed back as one who has been suffering from some brain disorder, the treatment of which is understood. He will be considered perfectly recovered, and be even ostentatiously trusted with checks payable to order, bags of gold, and heaps of postal orders; he will be invited to play cards in the most highly moral circles; he will be begged to take care of money belonging to the church, or the neediest widow, or the most helpless orphans, and in every way be made to feel that his disease was completely cured.

This, I am sorry to say, was not the treatment received by the Colonel on his return to England, which followed very shortly after his departure from Oregon. He was in a somewhat delicate position, because he was unable to know how far the reasons of his exile were understood by his old associates. Now, if a man simply disappears and remains a "vanished hand" for a period of years, society has certainly no right to question that man's own version of his story, or to entertain injurious suspicions, or to spread malicious reports. There are many instances on record of such re-appearances, and I have never heard that the adventures related by the man supposed to have gone under for good have been seriously doubted, whether he declares that he was wrecked on a desert island, married to an Amazon in the heart of the Dark Continent, carried off by friendly gorillas, or compelled to wander among Patagonians, Guachos, and Aztecs. But things are different where nasty stories survive, as the Colonel experienced.

His name, while he was yet in English society, was Percival Brooke West; he was a gentleman by birth, and the only son of his mother, who was a widow. By what extravagances, selfish indulgences, wanton wastings, profligacies, and prodigal-son business, he ran through his patrimony; hardened his heart; deadened his conscience; lost his taste for any pleasures which were not highly flavored, peppered, and cabob-curried; destroyed the sense of honor, and converted himself into a man-eating tiger, it needs not here to relate, nor need we here even indicate the path by which a plunging youth becomes a profligate and ruined man. Nor need we pause to tell the story of what he did. He "did something" many times, but at the last he was discovered. And then he retired—disappeared, became the "vanished hand" at the card-table, and the "voice that is still" in the smoking-room. The world went on without him, and, for fifteen years, the racecourse, the club, the streets of the West End knew him no longer, and without him the old game went on merrily—the young fellows on the "unlimited chuck," the hawks hovering over the pigeons, and ever and anon another young fellow "doing something" and speedily disappearing.

Then he returned.

Before Mr. Percival Brooke West showed himself in the old haunts—before, in fact, he took passage from New York, he cut off his beard, dyed his hair and mustache brown, and dressed himself in raiment as youthful as a man near fifty, who wishes to pass for five-and-thirty, can venture upon. He took up his quarters in a good Bond Street hotel, and he then considered which of his old friends he should first attempt. Naturally he chose the ones who had been in the same "swim" with himself—that plunging, headlong, exhilarating swim down the rapids, with the beautiful whirlpool at the end, reported to have sucked many a stout swimmer beneath its boiling waters. Had not he himself—?

He remembered seven or eight of the old set and sat down to write to them. The letters were really models. No polite letter-writer could have taught him more artfully to convey the strength and enduring warmth of his old friendship, his own joy at his return, and his eager looking forward to another meeting. He also contrived

to let it be understood that his financial position was extraordinarily sound, and that feasting would come into fashion again.

He forgot that in fifteen years such a set as his would most certainly have fallen all to pieces—first because the pace could not continue, and secondly because many of the men, younger than himself, would leave it in order to enter seriously upon the pursuit of the career. There are really very few who continue in the resolute pursuit of pleasure until past middle life, even though the ashes of the Dead Sea apples have got into their throats and made them cough and choke.

The letters dispatched, he walked about the streets waiting for answers. The dear old streets. Heavens! How delightful to be back again among them, even with so moderate a sum as eight hundred pounds to spend! But it would be enough, perhaps, to procure him readmission into the old circles, with such share in the riot of the Fool's Paradise as a man of fifty may look for.

After two days he got one answer—the first and the only one. It was from a dear and old friend, and a follower of his own way of thinking. The writer said that he rejoiced to receive so friendly a letter, because he had long thought he had no friends left at all; that he had been for a good while quite down on his luck, and was now stone broke. But that he had a wife and family to support, and in these his wretched and impoverished circumstances, he knew not where to look even for food for them; that he was ill, moreover, and like to die—with a good deal more to the same effect, concluding with the remark that they had both had misfortunes of the same kind, and ought to feel for each other. (“What the deuce does he mean?” asked the reader.) Wherefore a temporary advance would be most thankfully accepted, and a reply to this note would be expected with the fullest confidence and hope.

I am obliged to own that Mr. Brooke West tore this letter up in a rage.

“Confound the fellow! What did he mean by the ‘same misfortune’? Stone broke, was he? Let him starve!”

But there came no more answers to his letters. There-

fore he resolved upon calling on his old friends, though with some misgivings.

“‘The same misfortune.’ What did the impudent beggar and pauper mean?”

One of the old set was a partner in a City house; another was a barrister; a third, a fourth, and a fifth had once been officers in the army, and so on. He would call. He would find out if they intended to be nasty about a thing now fifteen years old, if, indeed, they knew of it.

The results of his visits illustrated in a very surprising manner the tendency which I have already deplored. That is to say, no one was in the least disposed to forget that thing, which they knew perfectly well, and coupled with his memory as indelibly as the sailor associates an anchor with the skin of his arm. And yet remark that he, the man chiefly concerned, was as willing to bury it, and have done with it, as the Red Indians are, in time of peace, to bury a tomahawk!

I have often wondered if that tomahawk was always expended in the funeral service, or whether it was sometimes dug up by a Resurrection brave and traded away for what it would fetch in whiskey.

It is a dreadful story of outrage and humiliation.

First, Mr. Brooke West went to call upon his old friend the partner in the City house. No one in his younger days had carried on the game with greater eagerness than the frolicsome young merchant adventurer. Surely this man, at least, would be glad to welcome his old friend.

Was he glad? Not at all. On the contrary it appeared that he was very sorry. When he got Mr. Brooke West's card, which was sent in to him, this merchant, no longer frolicsome, but now quite sober and dignified, turned very red in the cheeks—they were most respectable cheeks now, as ready to blush at wickedness as the cheek of the young person, and regularly seen every Sunday at church—said strong things about the unqualified impudence of disgraced swindlers, and sent out word that if the caller and owner of the card did not instantly leave that office, he was without delay to be driven and kicked down the stairs by the united efforts of the clerks.

Mr. Brooke West received this message, delivered in its integrity, without making any reply or attempt at justi-

fication. For a moment his eyes flashed and he clinched his fists, so that the clerk, who glibly delivered the reply, quailed and turned pale. Then, without a word, he walked away. It is the worst of such a situation that a man cannot afford the luxury of a row, else he would have gone for that irreproachable merchant.

Next he went, but with much less confidence, to call upon another old pal, a barrister in the Temple. He was a man who had got on in his profession, thought of taking silk, gambled no more, had forgotten the ways of iniquity and its wages, was married and lived on Campden Hill, and the memory of his younger days, when it came back to him, was no longer a thing he loved to dwell upon.

He, too, on receiving the card, jumped in his chair, used strong words, tore up the card, and sent an insulting message that he had nothing whatever to say to Mr. Brooke West, and refused to see him.

Again the Colonel walked away without reply. But, I think that, had he got that respectable merchant and that successful lawyer on the Embankment in the evening, two distinct flops or splashes would have been presently heard in the river; or had he met either of them on a lonely heath after dark there would have been a lively dance, with steps not described in the books.

Next, he went to his old club, where he found a new hall-porter, who did not know him. First, he asked for his old friend Captain Pacer? Alas! the gallant captain was dead this many a long year. Then for Major Fauchelevent, another of the glorious band of revellers? Why, the major had left the club a long time; had been, in fact, expelled from it. Then he asked for Colonel Cascade? This member, now General Cassade, was actually in the club at that moment. Mr. Brooke West sent up his card, and waited with pale face, and lips that trembled a little. In two minutes the general himself came down the stairs, leaning heavily on his stick, gray-haired, red-faced, gouty. And as for greeting, friendly smile, hand-shaking, and a cordial welcome home!—when the returned prodigal held out his hand, advancing with a genial smile, though an uncertain eye, and said with hearty smile, “Old fellow! how goes it?” the gallant officer, standing in the middle of the hall, banged his stick on

the floor, so that the panes in the windows shook for fear, and every pair of tongs jumped, and most of the glasses in the house fell into small fragments; and asked with purple cheeks and furious eyes, and a stentorian voice, what in the name of this, and of that—words which find their fittest home on the banks of the silver Thames, and especially at Richmond, or beside the stalls at Billingsgate—what he meant by his confounded impudence? A fellow who was expelled—actually expelled that very same club, daring to send up his impudent card, to call upon him, the general!

“Turn him out, hall-porter, do you hear?” he cried. “Turn him out into the street! Knock him down if he ventures to call again! Turn him out, I say!”

This last blow left no room for hope. That part of the world—after all a very small one—was closed. As a matter of fact, Mr. Brooke West did not know until then that he had been expelled the club. He thought that perhaps a kindly interpretation of certain fishy transactions, which had led to his exile, might have been laid before the committee. Well, that was done; he must try something else. As for making a scene or having a row, that was out of the question. He changed his hotel; he went to the Langham, where there are generally more Americans than English. There was little fear that anybody there would recognize him for what he had been in the Southern and Western States. He was now the English gentleman, who had traveled and lost some of the national prejudice and reserve. And here he stayed for six months and more. He began to make acquaintances, and presently forced his way to certain places where play—good, honest, high play—is to be had, whether baccarat, napoleon, hazard, monté, euchre, poker, or the simple roulette. He found there were still plenty of hawks about; and pigeons harder than ever to catch and pluck. But he did pretty well.

I do not know how or when it was that he first thought of Montoro's daughter. By accident he carried off her letters with the bank-notes. Now and then he turned them over in his portmanteau. “My dearest Father,” they began, and after eight pages at least of gossip, they ended, “Your most affectionate and loving daughter, Milly Montoro.” There was property—she spoke about “the

houses;" the poor creature, her father, had spoken of certain houses. Gradually he came to think upon this property more and more. It was almost certainly her father's property; it was not likely that it was settled upon the girl. Could not he get that property? It was a little thing, but it might be of immense service to him. And the thought came to fill his brain, as the thought of Naboth's vineyard filled the brain of Ahab. But there was only one way to get it; only one way to get that property—viz., boldly to assume the name of the man he had robbed; to see as little as possible of the girl and her relatives; and to sell the property for what it would fetch, put the money in his own pocket, and go away with it. As for the girl, she would find something to do; young people can always work. And houses worth a hundred and fifty pounds a year can be sold for something—two thousand pounds, or perhaps more. Two thousand pounds! But, then, to become a Claimant—to assume another man's personality!

The longer he pondered over this idea the more it pleased him. As for difficulties, there were, so far as he could see, few, so long as he kept out of the way of Montoro's cousins and relations; he could show an exact knowledge of the life led by the girl who had told her father everything; he had her letters; he knew the scrambling household, the enthusiast and visionary, the sons who had no chance at home and longed for one abroad—everything. He knew, or guessed, what kind of letters the man who had made so enormous a fortune sent to his daughter; they were vague letters, full of splendors and hazy glories, about which he could build any structure he pleased. Everything was ready to his hand, provided only there was no one to swear that he could not be the lost Montoro. Here again he was helped, though he admitted to himself that it was the one serious risk. The girl's relations neglected her altogether. They never made any inquiry about her; her father's people, who belonged to quite the lower class of clerks, were scattered and dispersed, and too much occupied with their own troubles to ask what had become of Charles's girl; her mother's sister, she who had married into "carriage company," had gone on up the hill of fortune, and was now, with her husband, so rich that she had a great house at

Wimbledon, with more than one carriage, and contented herself with writing to her niece once a year or so. The very people in whose house she lived knew nothing of her father; nothing was wanted to carry through the business but swiftness and courage—a rush and a bold front. If, in the interval, which must be brief, between the first appearance and the last, cousins should offer to renew cousinly acquaintance, those cousins must be insulted and snubbed. The thing could be done safely if it were done quickly. And though it was impossible to foresee all the difficulties which might arise, he could provide against most. Freedom and skill in lying, it seemed to him, were the first essentials. And so far he was the equal of any living man.

You have seen how he made his first appearance. It was after dark; if, peradventure, there was any one who might have known Montoro in the old days, then was there time to prepare that person for a change in appearance, manner, and voice; he did not assume the manner of the affectionate and tender parent; he could not, in the first place, and in the next, it was better for his purposes to be the hard and stern father. He was astonished, certainly, at his daughter's embrace, having forgotten that girls do kiss their fathers; but on the whole he was satisfied. So far he had been accepted without the slightest suspicion.

The next day he drove to Veritas Villa in the afternoon. His daughter came to him, but on this occasion she did not offer to throw herself into his arms; he held out his hand coldly, and she took it as coldly, though she had been crying all the night over this disappointment of a father. Many a woman cries over a disappointing son, but few have to lament that a father does not turn out as he had been expected. Perhaps she had allowed her imagination too much freedom. All she had to go upon were his letters, and these spoke to her of a writer very different from this cold man with the hard eyes.

"Let us talk," he said. "There is a good deal to say. Let me see, Milly is your name, is it not? Yes—Milly, to be sure—Milly." He wondered if it was Emily, Amelia, Millicent, Matilda, or something else. "It is strange, at first, talking to my own daughter."

"You did not find it strange writing to her."

"No, that was different. Did you expect to find your father what he is?"

"I did not," said Milly truthfully.

"You took me at your mother's estimate. I believe she told you I was of a meek and gentle nature. Perhaps, in those days, I was. If a man wants to get on, over there, mind you, he must get rid of his meekness. So, that is the first thing I have to say. Next, I am accustomed to have my own way. Please remember that. Perhaps you thought when I came home you would have it all your way. Not so fast, young lady."

Milly said nothing; but a red flush on either cheek might have told him, had he remembered Matilda, that she was her mother's daughter.

"When your mother died, you left Hackney Wick. Lord! what a place to live in! Where was it that you lived in Hackney Wick?"

"Why," said the girl, surprised, "in the old house, of course, where you lived until you went away."

"To be sure—the old house; the old house in Hackney Wick. And then you came here?"

"Mr. Richard Ambler, who managed the houses, suggested his cousin to my aunt, when they wanted some one to take care of me."

"Richard—Richard Ambler," he stroked his chin. "Do I remember him?"

"No, I should think not. He told me once he had never seen you."

"Good. I will go to see him then. Write down his address. He manages the houses, does he? We will walk round some day and see the old place. Are there any of my old friends left to see you sometimes?"

She shook her head.

"I think I have never seen any of your old friends or relations at all. I do not know where they are."

"Nor do I," he said, with perfect truth. "We shall not trouble ourselves much to find them, that is very certain. And your mother's people?"

"They now live at Wimbledon, a long way off; and I seldom see my aunt Paulina or my cousins. I do not think anybody cares very much about me, except the Amblers here."

"Very good," her father replied. "They keep away from you so long as you are poor, do they? Then we will keep away from them now that we are rich. As for me, remember that I refuse to see cousins of this kind. Absolutely refuse, mind!"

He looked so fierce—so needlessly fierce—that Milly was frightened. Certainly this new father of hers was not one to be crossed.

"When I went away," he said presently, "when I gave up the post I held in the firm of—— What the devil now was the name of the people?"

Milly shook her head. She did not know.

"I think the least you could have done," he replied angrily, "was to make yourself acquainted with the history of your own father. Never mind. What did you care about your father? When I went away your mother had about a hundred and fifty pounds a year—some trifle——"

"She lived upon it, trifle though you call it, until she died, since you sent her nothing, and I have lived upon it since," said Milly quickly.

"Yes, yes—I know. What is it worth now?"

"The houses are all let, and they produce, I believe, after allowing for repairs, 'about a hundred a eighty pounds a year. This is all paid to Mr. Ambler for my maintenance, education, and dress."

"A very handsome sum, upon my word! A hundred and eighty pounds a year! It should have been eighty, that would have been quite enough, and the rest saved for me."

"For you? But the property was my mother's, who left it to me!"

"Did she make any will?"

"No; there was no need. Nobody else could take her property."

"You forget—her husband. There were no settlements," he did not at all know whether there were any or not, but he assumed that there were none. "All your mother's effects were therefore, and are still, mine."

His! Milly trembled—was she to lose her little property—the property which was going to do so much for the home when she married George?

"Fortunately," she said timidly, "you are so rich that you do not want it!"

"Rich! yes; but no man refuses money, or can afford to throw it away. As for those houses—see, girl," he rose and walked to the window, "it is as well to understand at once—I have come over here at great loss of time and money, leaving enormous affairs—affairs of the very greatest importance, in the hands of people I only half trust, for you. I cannot stay long, there is nothing for me to do here; I have got no friends in England; I am out of the world; and there is no getting back to the old life."

"Getting back to the old life!" Milly stared and gasped. She pretty well knew what the old life was, with penniless brother-clerks for companions, and the bar-parlor for club; "the old life!"

"Of course; when I said the old life, I mean the old friends."

"Would you care to meet them again—those old friends of yours?"

Milly remembered her mother's lamentations over the memory of those old friends who took her husband from his home, led him into taverns, drank with him, and made him smoke too much tobacco; initiated him into the Orders and Brotherhoods of Ancient Buffaloes, Druids, Shepherds, Odd-Fellows, or even Free and Accepted Masons. Her husband's love of low life, she said, coupled with his lack of ambition, was the bane of her married life. Perhaps she exaggerated.

"As for the friends," her father replied, "if they have gone on in the old way, I don't want to meet them. When a man gets up in the world, the first thing he should do is to kick away the ladder, and not know one of 'em. As for the old life, I don't suppose I ever want to hear about that again. Why I was a clerk in the City; I had to go and write all day. A pretty kind of life mine was: at a desk all day, and your mother's tongue in the evening. Very well, then. Don't interrupt. There is nothing to keep me here. I shall sell the property, and we will go back together; father and daughter ought not to be separated; I suppose there is no particular reason why you should stay here, is there?"

"There is George," she replied.

“Your sweetheart? The chemist’s clerk? You may leave me to settle with him. About this Ambler fellow, this jackass with the Discovery, has he got any money, or do you keep him and all his family, too?”

“He has a small fortune; I know what it is because I have heard over and over again. He has five thousand pounds in the Three per Cents.”

“Of course, then, he is mighty fond of you with your hundred and eighty. Why, it is as good as doubling his income. Go tell him, if he is in the house, that I want to see him.”

“Father,” said Milly, standing before him, and looking him straight in the face, “there is one thing in which you must please understand me at once. I can never give up George.”

“Not even to go back with me—your own father?”

“Not even that. I do not think in any case, even without George, I could go back with you.”

“Why not, pray?”

“Because,” she was a perfectly truthful girl, and she therefore spoke exactly what was in her mind, “because I am afraid of you. Your letters prepared me for something very different. You are cold and harsh; you begin with taking away my property—my own, although you are so rich that you despise it for being such a very little property. I cannot prevent you, I suppose. But I will not go back to America with you, and I will not give up Geo——”

She broke down, her voice choked; she fled because she would not let this hard father of hers see that he had made her cry.

“It is rather more serious work than I anticipated,” said the Claimant to himself. “It makes a man respect the stage-father. I suppose she expected to be kissed and cuddled and made much of. Well—I can’t do it. As for George, I think it is a deuced lucky thing there is a George, because she’s a creature with a will of her own, not like her fool of a father, and she certainly will not give up her lover for a dozen fathers. So much the better for me. Because now I can sell up the property, and go away openly without concerning myself about an undutiful child who prefers to remain with her George. It is better than running away. I am really very pleased

there is a George. Bless them both! Suppose she had thrown herself upon my bosom and swore never to leave her fond and faithful father!"

At supper that evening, Mr. Ambler could talk of nothing but Mr. Montoro, who had spent two hours with him in the map-room, and had been most affable and kind.

"Before speaking of the business in hand, which was, of course, you, Milly, my dear, he engaged in conversation concerning the Great Discovery. I found in him one of those candid intellects, keen, incisive, logical, and open to conviction. Nothing of prejudice about Mr. Montoro. He has been brought up, he confesses, in the old exploded school, and has always been taught that the earth was round; he was, indeed, greatly surprised to learn that it is, on the other hand, flat, with a surrounding Rim of ice. I begged him not to take my simple word for it, but to listen, first, to the arguments. Well, he sat down. First, I gave him my Plain Reasons—these shook him. Then he answered, one after another, my Simple Questions, and I flatter myself conviction was growing in. Then I read him the Refutation, which he put in his pocket, and promised to see me again upon the matter.

"Then he began to talk about his own affairs. Milly, he is immensely rich, he is a millionaire over and over again. I can hardly tell you what he has; there are mines, cattle-runs, farms, houses—one whole town belongs to him, he says. Think of it. What a glorious country it must be for a man in less than twenty years to accumulate such wealth! I think I have made a Recruit of the very first water—a Cræsus among Recruits. Hitherto, what we lacked in money we made up in logic. Perhaps now we shall get both money and logic.

"He spoke, among other things, of a college or university, I forget which, in this city of his. It was built and is owned entirely by himself. He said that among other professional chairs there is a chair of astronomy worth a thousand a year or so, and that it is, by great good luck, at present vacant. He has this appointment in his own gift. If, he added, he is quite satisfied with the new Discovery as to which he was already favorably prepared by his daughter's letters—thank you, Milly, my dear, you are

always our guardian angel"—Milly looked horribly guilty—"he sees no reason why I should not fill that chair."

"Oh, Lord!" cried George.

"Eh, my dear?—eh, boys?"

"Where did he say it is?" asked George. "A thousand a year! In his own gift? And in America?"

"He did not say where. We were only discussing preliminaries, and I do think, children, that the name of Professor Ambler—no longer plain Reginald Ambler—on a title-page will carry weight, whether it is the title-page of the Plain Reasons or the Simple Questions."

But Milly's cheeks were burning, because she had never spoken of her guardian's Discovery with respect in any letter to her father. What did he want to deceive Mr. Ambler for in so trifling a matter? And with all this wealth, why—why should he desire to take from her the little property which would be so useful to George and herself? Was it to make her an heiress?

"George," she said that night when she dismissed him at the garden-gate, "I do not want his riches; I wish he would go away and leave me. Oh, George, I do not feel the least speck of love for him!"

CHAPTER V.

A BEAUTIFUL DREAM.

So far, things had gone so easily with this Pretender, that he began seriously to wonder why—considering the vast number of lost cousins, missing parents, strayed brothers, and wandering uncles, claimants like himself for the family affection, and family funds—family friends do not continually turn up. Perhaps they do. Perhaps there are hundreds among us—unsuspecting innocents—bearing names to which they are not entitled, and enjoying fortunes to which they have no right. What is to prevent a man who knows the circumstances to march into the club of a dead man, for instance, supposing he alone knows that the man is dead, and taking up his membership?

Our Claimant went to the villa again next day; and the day after. The girl, who thought she was his daughter,

attracted him. She looked so pretty that he could not choose but come. And after fifteen years, the sight of a young and beautiful English girl is something, even to a hardened, selfish old gambler. She behaved nicely to him, was respectful in her language and obedient, save in the matter of that young fellow.

"Milly," he said at the fourth visit—he was already so far advanced that he called the girl by her Christian name, and even addressed her as "my dear," and "my child," without stammering or hesitation. "Milly, we are getting on better. Are you still afraid of me?"

"How can I help being afraid of you?" she replied truthfully. "You want to take me away from my friends, and from my lover, and you are going to take away what I thought was my property."

"Oh, your property! Silly child! Why, across the ocean, for every pound you have here, you shall get a hundred. Your property! Why, it is because I want to have done with the place altogether that I wish to sell it. Never heed such a trifle. Now tell me, do you like society?"

"I do not know, we have no friends. I believe there is very good society at Stamford Hill, but we never go anywhere."

"Do you like theaters?"

"I do not know; we never go to any."

"Do you like concerts?"

"Oh yes. I have been to a good many concerts, and there are lectures and dissolving-views."

"Do you like the West End?"

"I have never been there. You do not know as yet; we are very quiet people; we are always at home working for the children."

"Yes," her father was grown softer in his manner, though he was no whit more demonstrative or affectionate; "ye—yes," he said, stroking his mustache; "all these things you know nothing of, but you would love them if you knew them. Milly, without society there is no life; without amusement there is no life; without excitement there is no life. You miserable people here do not live; you sit all together in a room, you breathe and walk in a cage; you know nothing about the world; you have no idea of its pleasures. If you marry this young clerk,

you will go on breathing and walking in a cage. Why, it fills me with amazement that you can go on contentedly with this suburban life; and yet there must be millions all living like this."

"Why not? It is a very pleasant life. I think I would rather not have the excitement you speak of."

"Come with me, Milly," said her father, his face actually softening, "and you shall have a life which shall give you one pleasure after another—every day crowded and filled up with pleasures."

But she shook her head.

"I was thankful for George at first," he said to himself. "I thought it would rid me of the girl. Now I see I was a fool, for I could do much better with her than without her. But how to persuade her?"

For by this time another thought was lying in his brain, receiving every day new food and encouragement. He saw, in a kind of ecstatic vision, a salon or drawing-room such as he had read of in the old days when he used to read French novels. It was a beautifully furnished room, with cabinets, china, pictures, a piano, mirrors, and all the pretty things which belong to the life he had abandoned fifteen years ago. He sighed as he thought of such a room. "I did not know," he said, "until I came home, that I cared for it all so much." The room was full of people; there were ladies in beautiful toilets, young men in evening dress. They were sitting, walking, and talking. He was himself a gentleman again to outward show. At the piano sat the girl—he always thought of Milly as the girl—playing and singing, the younger men hovering round her, making their court. Presently she rose, said something, and laughed, and they all sat down to a table covered with green cloth, he at the head.

Yes, the Colonel was not in imagination returning to paths of virtue, which, whether they led him into pleasant drawing-rooms or not, would certainly prove monotonous to him. It filled his soul with happiness, however, to think that he could fill a room with people "*comme il faut*," through the attractions of his daughter, and do a stroke of business with them afterward. The perfect gambler can think of nothing as complete, unless there are a pack of cards in it and a green table.

There was also another dream which much he loved,

yet sometimes feared might be difficult to realize. In this dream there was one young man only in the room besides the girl and himself. The young man was often changed, because the evening was made expensive for him. And in this dream there was a mirror before the piano in which the girl saw the hand held by the young man when the flirting and singing were over and play began. Then, by a judicious arrangement of chords, she conveyed to her confederate the knowledge of that hand; or else she got up and looked over his shoulder, while that innocent sheep's eyes looked up into her artless face. Oh, a beautiful dream! But before it could become possible two things were necessary: the girl must be across the water, and away from her friends, and she must be made to love a life of luxury and ease.

"Good Heavens!" he cried, "what a chance there is for me! They've tried it with their painted and ruddled old hacks, their Frenchwomen and their octoroons, but never once, I swear, with a sweet-faced, innocent-looking English girl. They couldn't get one. As for difficulty, there would be none once across the Atlantic, away from all her friends. As for doing her any harm, that is rubbish. Very likely she would fall in love—many young women do. I could get her off my hands that way without any trouble. And, if not, why, then, when I had made all I want—it isn't really much—I could tell her everything, and pack her off to Johnny in Oregon. She'll console him for the loss of the money, which wasn't his any more than mine, and I shouldn't want her more than a year or two."

He forgot that, before you get an honest English girl to act as professional decoy to a card-sharper, there is likely to be a very considerable kind of row.

This dream remained in his mind so long that it became a purpose with him. He was growing old; it would be dreadful to give up the comfortable life to which he had returned, and yet what to do when the money went? He thought how easy and pleasant it would be to receive his friends in a real high-toned salon, with a pretty girl to play and sing to them, and help him to cheat them. She should go with them. As for her lover, he must be given up.

But first it was necessary to win her confidence. This

he might have done very easily by the simple show of affection. The man could feign a good deal, but love, the plain and unmistakable love which many foolish fathers wrap up and surround their daughters, he could not feign. Therefore he sought to win her confidence by dazzling her.

First, he took her to a splendid restaurant, and gave her a magnificent dinner, consisting of a dozen courses, served in a great room full of glass, mirrors, and flowers, with champagne, of which Milly had heard, but had never tasted.

"If you like," said her father, "you shall dine with us every night. Good Heavens! how have I longed in America for this kind of thing again—I mean in the first days, you know, before——"

"What, could you have known anything of this kind of life in the old days?"

"Perhaps," he said, after a while, "a clerk may get some knowledge of what a dinner should be by flattening his nose at the window."

"But," she went on, "to waste all this time and money every day in such a tedious——"

"Confound it!" he cried in a rage. "You are not worth such a dinner. After all, how should you understand it? A mutton-chop and a potato, I believe, would have pleased you quite as well."

Then he took her to a theater. They sat in a private box, and Milly looked with wonder from the stage to the house, and the house to the stalls. The performance was a burlesque, and a favorite one. It was played partly by actresses dressed as men, and Milly pitied them, though the audience clapped and applauded. She could see nothing to applaud; you see it wants a little education before a girl, a suburban and East End girl, can really admire the spectacle of women dressed in tights, or the performance of a ballet, or the delivery of bad verses crammed with puns, or the comic business, which seems to them like horseplay. Such a girl does not see anything to laugh at in a pun, or in a funny get-up, or in a man tumbling down—for that matter, she does not want to laugh at all; she would like rather to cry, even, so long as she could see a beautiful story beautifully played. But this her father did not understand, but fell into a rage

when he perceived that Milly was only bored with the performance. He thought she was sulking with him on account of his previous harshness.

"You shall have a private theater of your own if you like, and a ballet and all, and you shall be manager," he said. "You shall act on your stage if you like, only say what you would like."

"I do not want any ballet, thank you," she replied coldly, "and I thought theaters were better worth going to."

"Oh, very well," he replied; "if you are resolved to like nothing I do for you, I might as well leave off trying to please you."

He was now in no hurry about going back. At first he spoke of going back in a few days, but he stayed on. It was a fortnight since he first came to the villa, and now he came every day, though Upper Clapton is not by any means "handy" for the Langham Hotel. He saw that the girl disliked him still, but that she was trying to conquer her dislike, and he went on with his plan of conciliation. He had expected suspicion; there was none in any quarter: he was even received by Mr. Richard Ambler, on whom he called to ask about his houses, without the least suspicion. What he had not expected, because he would not have reckoned it as a factor of the least importance, was dislike. Now, with this larger scheme in his mind, it was of the first importance that the girl should learn to trust in him and to believe him before getting her to obey him.

He therefore persisted. Since she did not care for the theater, he took her to the races. He was rewarded by the consciousness that the girl was all day profoundly dejected. She did not want to see the horses running; she did not in the least care who won; and she was frightened at the great crowd, in which she felt so entirely out of place. Yet he had got a carriage, a hamper, and a most beautiful lunch, and was mindful of a day long past when, with a similar carriage and hamper, but another companion, he had spent a most enjoyable day at Ascot.

He drank all the champagne himself—a little too much—and then began telling her stories which terrified her, and made her wonder what manner of life her father must have led before he married, since he was familiar with

what seemed to her simple mind the most wicked and wasteful profligacy.

"Do you like no kind of amusement, then?" he asked her.

She tried to explain to him that there are many other amusements besides feasting, drinking, burlesques, racing, betting, and gambling, which might seem to girls pleasing and desirable things.

"Sometimes," she said, "on summer evenings I go upon the river with George, or we walk to Tottenham and as far as Hornsey. There are lectures to go to, and a choral society, then we have lawn-tennis, and sometimes there are new books to read, and new music to play."

Her father grunted.

Then he tried her with the shops of Regent Street. No woman, he thought, can withstand the temptation of fine things. He showed her all the beautiful things in the world, or nearly all—dainty costumes, costly with lace, bonnets which were a dream of loveliness, gloves and parasols, ribbons, and what not—such as the girl had never dreamed of possessing. She refused them—she actually refused them.

"George," she said, "is only a clerk as yet. If I were to go dressed in these beautiful things it would make him ridiculous."

"George! What do I know about George? Are you not my daughter and my heiress? Can't you remember that? Sometimes one would think you were going out to America as a pauper. Do you really imagine that my daughter—mine!—could show herself in New York dressed like——"

"Like the daughter and the wife of a clerk. But perhaps the New York people will have no opportunity of giving an opinion."

"Was there ever before," asked her father impatiently, "a girl who was bound to inherit millions, and preferred—actually preferred to go about as shabby as a shop-girl?"

"George is only a clerk," she said; "I must dress according to my husband's station."

"Why, hang it! are you not my heiress? Who will have my money if not you? One would think you were going out to America to be a governess."

"Forgive me," she said. "I have been so long accus-

tomed to consider your Fortune as a thing which has nothing to do with me, that I cannot suddenly change my mind. If you designed to make me an heiress, you should have told me so ten years ago. Then, I dare say, I should have been brought up differently. And, perhaps, I should have liked these things. But I belong to the people whom you now despise—though you were born among them. We live the simple, homely life which you have forgotten. As for these things—your great dinners, your theaters, and all the rest of them, I suppose you enjoy them now. But in the old days you knew nothing of them. Had you not better leave me alone with my friends, just as you always have done? You do not want me in your new life. Why,” she looked him full in the face with those honest eyes of hers, “there is something—I know not what—which stands between us. You do not love me as you used to do when you wrote to me, or else you can no longer pretend as you did then—but I cannot believe those letters were all pretense. When I am with you I irritate you, and then you fly into a rage and swear. You try to please me with all kinds of things which I do not want——”

“What is it you do want?” he asked her. “What can I buy for you? Only tell me. See, Milly, I want you to like me. It isn’t a question of money”—indeed it was not—“I will buy anything you fancy. But you won’t like anything that I can say or do. As for those old letters of mine, bring them to me. Who is to remember what he said ten years ago—writing to a little school-girl?”

She brought them to him obediently. There were not many—only about twenty, all tied up neatly with green silk and smelling of lavender. He cut the string and read the letters deliberately. Remembering the log-hut, and the whisky-bottle, Johnny’s wandering eyes and rambling speech, his miserable story and his wretched life, he was struck with admiration. The man possessed the first and most essential qualifications of a novelist—he could make those who read his letters believe his statements; more than this, he could enter into his reader’s mind and understand what she would think of himself; what sort of hero she would construct of her father; and he wrote accordingly.

"I was a clever fellow," he said at length, "when I wrote those letters. Yes, Milly, there are many things in my life of which I may be proud, and many which might have to be explained away. You thought from these letters that it was all sailing before a fair wind. You are mistaken; it was a hard fight all the time with men as keen to get on as I was myself. Would you have liked me to tell you the true history of those years of struggle?"

"I should like," said Milly, "my father to be as affectionate and as tender to me in words as he was in writing."

He shook his head.

"It can't be, my child. If you like I could write more letters to you, just the same as these. But I can't talk like that. Here, take back the things!"

"I do not want them any more," she replied sadly. "To read them now would give me more pain than pleasure. I would rather talk with you than have any more letters from you."

"Why, there," he replied, "that is exactly what I wanted you to say. No more humbugging milk-and-water letters, but good, honest, straightforward talk. You know me now, Milly, for what I am;" he stood upright and struck his chest; "a strong, plain man, and perhaps as good-hearted as if I came to you with tears and kisses. I am pleased with you—yes, satisfied and pleased. You are a very pretty, well-set-up girl, good face, good figure, good form. You will do. You don't pretend to love your father; very well, how should you? And you are not afraid to tell him so. I like you the better for it. Some day, perhaps, you will like me. Meantime, as you are my daughter, and are going to inherit everything, come out with me first to look at your inheritance."

Always the same refrain, "Come out with me."

He certainly made no pretense at being a mild and peaceful character, and filled the walls of Veritas Villa with tales which fired the blood of the boys, and made them long to rush beyond the reach of civilization, to ride the half-broken mustang, to shoot at Mexican robbers, to sleep round camp-fires, to wear a red-flannel shirt, a crimson belt, a slouched hat, and great boots. Even Copernica thought that no woman could have a happier

lot than to live in constant danger from scalping Indians and blood-thirsty Mexicans.

He laid himself out to please everybody except George, whom he treated with cold contempt, insomuch that the lover was fain to keep away from the house when Milly's father was there, and carried on his courtship in the garden. He conciliated Mrs. Ambler with smooth words and flatteries, assuring her that there was no lady in England who would have brought up his daughter with more care and kindness than she had shown, and that the boys and girls should always be his sacred care, and he gave them all watches, and to Copernica a gold watch and chain.

Yet they were afraid of him.

As for the Discoverer, Mr. Montoro became to him as a god, or pope at least, because he announced his adhesion to the theory, and admitted that he could no longer stand out against the overwhelming arguments in its favor.

"The world is flat," he said. "How thick it is, which we should see if we looked beyond the Outer Rim, it is impossible, as you say, for us to surmise. I have never taken any special interest in science, because my work has been of a more practical nature, but I hope I can follow an argument as well as other men; and your argument, Mr. Ambler, has convinced me."

"To win a Recruit, and such a Recruit," replied the blushing philosopher, "by the sheer force of persuasion, is indeed a triumph."

Mr. Montoro then turned the conversation upon the subject of his college. It was a new college, he said; there would be, probably, at first, but a small number of students; the astronomical class would be one of the smallest. Still, it was an opening; the country was becoming settled and populated; the college was endowed; gradually the institution would grow. Would it really be worth Mr. Ambler's while to leave London and transport himself to a strange country in order to lecture on his own system in his own way?

Worth his while! The Discoverer bounded in his chair.

"Then, Mr. Ambler, I shall be pleased to offer you the post. It is my intention to leave this country for America in a few weeks. You can follow as soon after me as is possible for you to wind up your affairs."

"I have no affairs," replied the Philosopher. "There is the society, to be sure, but I am afraid that there is only one man, my convert Bagshott, who will lament its temporary suspension. Bagshott leaves me the scientific department, and occupies himself with the weekly demonstration from his pulpit that the Discovery is the only way of reconciling revelation with science. The only way, Mr. Montoro! Such a man is useful to me, and I shall be sorry to leave him. They say his congregation has dwindled to nothing. But the scientific aspect of the question, which is my own special department, demands that such a chance of spreading the Truth should not be neglected. Where, sir, if I may ask, is your college situated?"

"It is," said Mr. Montoro, as unblushingly as if he had been Johnny of Oregon himself—"it is in Nevada, in the city which has risen on my own ground, surrounding my own works. You will not find it on any map, because the city has only been built two or three years. You go first to Colorado, and next—— But no matter for these details. They can wait."

It will be seen presently with what object the Colonel was deceiving the unfortunate philosopher.

"Children," he said that evening, "the way is now clear to me. Should you like to go to Nevada?"

Nevada! Bret Harte's books were about Nevada, were they not? Nevada; where there are rocky mountains, grizzly bears, silver-mines, adventurers, wolves, buffaloes, prairies, rattlesnakes, perils and dangers, wealth, revolvers, bowie-knives, and happiness! Go to Nevada? Kepler looked at Tycho Brahe, and gasped. Ptolemy seized Galileo by the hand, and said, "Oh, oh!" slowly, and from his heart.

"Where is Nevada?" asked his wife.

"It is one of the newest of the States. It is the place where Mr. Montoro made his money. You did not know that, Milly?"

"No. I have never had any letters from Nevada."

"There he has built a city—it is only two years old—on his own grounds, and about his own works; and in the city is the college. I am offered—definitely and formally offered—the chair of astronomy. Shall I accept the offer?"

There was a rapturous shout.

“Well, my children,” he went on, “if it is ordained that I achieve the greatness in America, which Oxford and Cambridge refuse me, I hope that I shall accept it in a becoming spirit. As for you going with me, boys, I am sure that with Mr. Montoro’s glorious example before us, and his patronage at starting, we need have no fear or hesitation.”

And then there was such joy in the Ambler family as would have done your heart good only to see it, without understanding what it was about at all. To the elder boys it meant wealth unbounded, like Mr. Montoro’s, but without so much temper; to the younger it meant change and fun—no doubt there were no schools in Nevada; to Copernica it meant justice—tardy, but still justice—to her father; to the good wife it meant relief from tightness. Who would not go to Nevada for a thousand pounds a year?

Perhaps, too, they all thought there might come a time when there would be less talk about that Grand Discovery which made the family look upon all glory as vanity, so much had it spoiled and wasted the father’s life.

It was now four weeks since Mr. Montoro’s return. He had partly succeeded in reconciling Milly. She did not, it is true, venture again upon the mistake of kissing him, or of expecting any caresses from him; but she had overcome the repulsion which at first filled her soul with regard to him. Perhaps, if he had behaved more kindly with regard to George, she would have looked upon him with some approach to affection. What he wanted most, however, he had got from her. She trusted him; she did not in the least suspect him, and she was growing very nicely, and just as he could wish, to feel toward the great Fortune a personal interest. He felt sure that he could manage the rest very easily, once she was away from her friends. You do not, when you go a tempting, approach the subject straight; you work round it; you talk about other things; you prepare the mind for it; you sap the ground; you gradually destroy principle; you do not, at last, make the last step till you are perfectly certain of success. The Colonel, who was a veritable serpent for craft and subtlety, knew that it would take time to convert an innocent girl into a rogue, thief, and confederate

of cheats; but he knew what he was about, and he also knew from long experience that there are few so strong as to resist all kinds of temptation.

He now took his next step.

"I must tell you, Milly," he said with a touch of sorrow in his voice, "that I am now making my preparations to go back in a week—this day week. I have again seen Mr. Richard Ambler, and I hear that he can find me a purchaser for the houses, and will draw up the necessary papers immediately. You have heard that I have given Mr. Ambler a post in my college. He and his family will therefore start at once. This, if you persist in refusing to accompany me, deprives you of a home."

"I can find one with George."

"I shall not oppose it," said her father. "I might have looked higher for my daughter, but I will no longer oppose your inclinations. You shall marry the man of your choice, and I hope you will be happy. What you will do when you come into your Fortune I do not know. You will not, I fear, either of you, be equal to the position in which you will find yourselves. However, that is, after all, not my business, because I neglected you so long. It is my punishment that I cannot interfere as an ordinary parent might."

"You are very kind to me now," said Milly.

"You mean that I was not always. Perhaps not—perhaps not. I did not know you, Milly, when first I landed, four weeks ago. Forgive me, my daughter!"

She looked at him in surprise. Strange that even when he was at his softest, using words which in other men would have been accompanied by some outward sign of tenderness, his eyes were as keen and his mouth as hard as if he were contemplating something connected with fight and struggle.

"Now, Milly, I have been thinking a good bit over things, and I am prepared to say to you, 'Go and marry your lover.' I will not ask you to give him up, and come across the water with me. I will even make a handsome allowance, which will enable you to live like a lady, if you please."

"Oh!" she replied, taking his hand. But he withdrew it quickly, as if afraid of her falling upon his neck again.

"I did not expect this," she added. "What am I to say? How shall I thank you?"

"Nay, I want no thanks. There is only one thing you might do to pleasure your father."

"Why, is there anything, except giving up George, that I would not do?"

"It is this, Milly: You know I have been a long time from home, but I have never forgotten you; my letters prove that. Now, it grieves me to go back without even being able to show any of my kith or kin what I have done and the edifice I have raised. It is hard to have no one belonging to you. They will say when I go back, 'Colonel'—they call me Colonel, out there—'how did you find the little maid?'—that's you, Milly—that is you; and I shall have to tell them in reply that the little maid is grown up into a woman, who doesn't care about her father—why, how should she? it is not in reason that she should—and is going to be married to a lover in a low station of life. And there is not a creature in all the world who cares about me. It seems hard, doesn't it? What is the use of money if it can't bring me that kind of happiness?"

The tears came into Milly's eyes as she stood before her father and listened. They would have flowed more readily if his own had showed the least emotion.

"Then I thought to myself, suppose that Milly would come over with me for a year, or two years—not more. Suppose I were to promise her faithfully that after two years, at most, she should go back to her lover, if she pleased. It is not a very long time, two years. Milly is young; her lover is young. He may very well wait two years. Come, Milly, what do you say? A run across the ocean, a ride across the continent. First, Nevada for a year or so; then we will run over to California; perhaps go up country to—to Oregon," he laughed. "Yes, I should like to show you Oregon. I know people in Oregon who would interest you very much. And when you were tired of your father, and his great house, and all, you could come straight away back to your lover's arms. What do you say, Milly?"

She was silent, thinking. Was there ever a more reasonable or more generous offer? He would let her do what she pleased, and only suggested, leaving the offer for

her consideration, that she should give him two years of her society.

"I will consult George about it," she said at length.

"*Soit!* Let it be so. Consult this infallible George. Milly, one word of advice. Don't let George know that you think him infallible. It spoils a husband. Your mother never spoiled me in that way. Quite the contrary."

That evening George and Milly had a long and earnest talk. The proposal made by Mr. Montoro seemed really prompted by affection. After two years she might return to him. Was two years a great deal for a father to ask of his daughter? And then—one need not be quixotic, although one is a clerk in a chemical works, with prospects—there was all this great Fortune. No one doubted the existence of the Fortune, any more than they suspected Mr. Montoro of being somebody else. This Glorious Fortune! Her father might marry again; he might leave it away from his daughter; he might do anything with it. Surely it was worth a little concession to make that inheritance safe.

"I think, dear," he said at length, "I think—how can I part with you for two years?—that you ought to go."

"I think so, too, George. But I am afraid of him. I do not know why, but I am afraid of him. The Amblers will be with us. It is a great thing that Copernica is going. But I am afraid of him."

CHAPTER VI.

JOHNNY AGAIN.

MILLY must go, then. For two years she would be her father's companion. It was quite right and just; the proposal was put so generously that it was impossible to refuse. Yet George came away that night from Veritas Villa in great sadness and despondency. Milly was afraid of her father. Would he suffer her to return after two years? He was afraid of the man, too. He knew not why, but he was; the sight of Mr. Montoro filled him with a kind of rage. What business had such a man with

such a daughter? Some wise men hold that daughters do take after, and resemble, more the father than the mother, which is an admirable thing when the character of the father is worth preserving and copying. But in what single respect did Milly resemble her father?

Filled with these thoughts he did not at first perceive that there was a man wandering about in the middle of the road with unsteady gait, apparently the worse for drink, and looking for something. Presently this man made for him in a devious and zig-zag course, and accosted him. His voice was a little thick, but he was not too drunk to express himself. He knew what he wanted.

"Sir," he said—in fact, he did say "shir," and he ran his words together a little, and missed a syllable here and there, and omitted many of the minor words, pronouns, conjunctions, auxiliary verbs, and so forth. Let us hide these proofs of human frailty as much as possible, and print what he meant to say without dwelling too much on how he said it. We are all human, only some are more human than others. "Sir," he said, "can you tell me which is the house of Mr. Ambler?"

"Mr. Ambler's house?" George stared. "What do you want with Mr. Ambler? It is half-past ten, and they are all gone to bed. Come, you must wait to see Mr. Ambler till to-morrow. Do you want to prove that the world is square?"

The man shook his head.

"Must get up for me. Haven't seen her nigh twenty years."

"Seen whom?"

"Seen the little maid?"

"What little maid?"

"My little maid—my daughter—Milly Montoro."

"What?"

"My little maid—my dear little maid," this strange person went on repeating.

Why, it was like the burden of Milly's father's letters. They were full of "my little maid, my dear little maid?"

"Who are you, then?" George seized him by the shoulder. "Stand up," he said, "try to be sober. Pretend to be sober, man. Who the devil are you?"

"I'm—I'm—her father: the little maid's father—Milly's father."

“Her father? What is your name, man?”

“My name is Montoro. The Colonel called me Johnny. Real Christian-name—baptized name—is a fool of a name—Worshipful Charles.”

“Good Lord!” cried George. “But you are drunk. Where do you come from?”

“The Commercial Docks, Rotherhithe. Came over from Quebec in timber-ship. Was ship’s cook.

“Look here,” said George. “Whoever you are, you cannot go to the house to-night, because you are drunk, and because it is late. You must, therefore, come with me.”

He took the man by the arm, and led him unresisting to his own lodgings, which were not far off.

“Now,” he said, turning up the gas in the sitting-room, “let me look at you.” He did look, and he trembled.

The man was dressed in an old and ill-fitting suit of black cloth. I do not think there is any kind of dress in which a man may look so fearfully shabby as a suit of black. This is partly due to the fact that it is evening dress, and should suggest social cheerfulness. In the same way, no one could possibly look more melancholy than a clown by daylight outside his show and in official dress. A dress-coat, too, when it has grown old, and has seen long service in some third-class restaurant, falls into curves, lines, and folds which seem to debase and degrade the figure of man beneath. This man’s whole suit, again, was disgracefully and deplorably dirty, and covered with streaks of grease. Everything was to match; he wore no collar, but had a red handkerchief tied about his neck, and a gray flannel shirt in rags; his hat was a slouched felt of the commonest description. He took off the hat and stood in the light, a little sobered; but his eyes were heavy with drink. They were light blue eyes, unsteady and weak. He wore a long grayish beard, but his hair was brown and silky. And the reason why George trembled was not because his clothes were so shabby, but because his face was like unto the face of his sweetheart and his eyes like her eyes, though different in expression. The daughter was like the father, and he knew—he was perfectly certain—that before him stood the man whom the other pretended to be.

“Once more—who do you say you are?”

“Worshipful Charles Montoro is my name.”

“Where do you come from?”

“From Oregon, last,” he replied, partly sobered by this young man’s earnestness. “I came from Quebec in a timber vessel; shipped as cook.”

“You came over here as cook? Where is all your money then?”

The man shook his head.

“I haven’t got any money,” he replied. “There was some in the bunk; the Colonel stole it.”

“Where is your Fortune then?”

“I haven’t got any Fortune. How should I have any?”

“What did you mean then by your letters?”

“My letters? Oh!” Then he put his hand to his head in a feeble way, trying to understand. Then he sat down looking bewildered. And presently, while George waited for further explanation, his head fell back and his eyes closed. He was asleep. And while he slept he looked still more like Milly.

The man slept all through the night; George mounting guard over him lest he should wake up and slip away. By the morning light he looked more disreputable than ever. When he awoke at seven, George took him into his own bedroom, and gave him, to begin with, a completely new rig-out, in which, at all events, he presented a respectable appearance. The man was very much subdued, and asked no questions, taking what was offered him, and doing what he was told. Apparently a gentle and amenable person. Then George gave him breakfast, and after breakfast bade him tell his story.

I suppose there never was a man, since gift of speech was first granted to humanity, who rambled in his talk so much as Johnny of Oregon; what he had to tell we already know, but George did not. He got at last, and after a thousand twistings and turnings, to the point at which the Colonel came, stayed with him a week, proved excellent company, and finally made off with the money and the letters. Then he went on:

“When the Colonel stole that money, and the letters as well, and I could not come up with him, nor hear of him anywheres, I hadn’t the heart to go back to the clearin’,

and hung around a bit doin' odd jobs, as many are ready to do all over the States. And so somehow I worked my way back again to the east, and in the spring got to Quebec. Now when you stand on the hill at Quebec and look across to the east, it seems as if you can see all the way across the water to London. Curious that, isn't it? And what with havin' none of her letters to read, and lookin' across the water, and thinking I was gazing upon Hackney Wick, I fell to dreamin' about the little maid, and longin' to see her again."

"So you came home, and got drunk?"

"Yes, sir; that is so. Oh, I knew very well I should have to own up! And I knew what they would say; particularly Matilda's sister, P'leena, who married very well, and now keeps carriage company. It would be rough on the little maid at first to see her father such a disgraceful old pauper, and a shame to a respectable terrace to be seen loafin' around, after all I'd told her, too. First I thought I would just look over the palings like, and go away; somebody would tell me which of them she was; perhaps I'd beg a copper to carry away and remember her by. Then I thought how would it be if I made a clean breast and begged her pardon humble, and so went away again. All the journey across the ocean in that timber ship I thought about it, and what I should do. And when I got across to Poplar only this morning, I tell you, sir, I'd no more notion of what was best to be done than when I started."

"Perhaps you never have had any notion in all your life of what was best to be done."

"Perhaps not, sir. Men who see clear get on in the world. I never saw further than the end of the job."

"But why did you get drunk?"

"Well, twasn't right; but think of it. I hadn't seen a public-house for nineteen years. They haven't got any where I've been. They've got bars, but if you want a comfortable drink with a pipe and a friend to talk to, you must come to England. I don't quite know how many public-houses there are on the straight road between this and Poplar, but I tried the drink at most, with a pipe here and a pipe there, feelin' comfortable because I was workin' my way, you see, with the little maid at the end of the way."

"And so you got disgracefully drunk. Yes—I see."

There seemed no possibility of doubting or disputing the man's statements. They were told too naturally for deception. But what was to be done next?

"What is the Colonel like?"

Johnny described the man who had repaid his hospitality by stealing his money. He described him so exactly that there was little doubt in George's mind who was the personator, in spite of the discrepancies of beard and mustache.

"As for his profession, he's a sportsman," continued his informer. "He sometimes plays alone, and sometimes he's one of a gang. Sometimes he travels and plays in the cars; sometimes he goes to bars, and sometimes he keeps a gaming-saloon. There's thousands like him in the countries where I've been. Very good company they are when there's no plunderin' and cheatin' around. If there's a quarrel, which there mostly is, it's wild cats. I was a peaceful man, I was, and nobody never drew bead on me; but I've seen many a fight over the cards, and now and then a quiet man like myself got hit when the firin' begun. The best way is to roll over and lie on the floor till it's over. I remember now, once, down to——"

"Never mind that. Let us get on."

"I'm a peaceful man," he continued, repeating himself as usual; "yet if I had come across the Colonel after he stole my money, I'd have shot him. Yes, if I hanged for it. Seems now as if I don't care much about it any more. I never had any money before I found that roll of notes in the empty cabin, and I'm no worse off than I was then. P'raps I shall go back to Oregon, and live in the cabin again by myself when I've seen the little maid. It's quiet living all by yourself. When you go about in gangs there's no such things as getting an hour's quiet, and a peaceful man loves to be quiet. Lord! if you'd heard the language I had to hear every day, you'd like a few years' quiet. No; I don't care so much about the money, and of course the Colonel has lost it all by this time."

"You want to see your daughter. I will help you, but on conditions. First, I must tell you that I am going to marry her."

"You are going to marry my little maid?" He stared in great amazement. "Why, she can't——"

"I am sure," said George, "that she has not remained

a baby in arms for nineteen years. Yes; I am going to marry her. And it seems to me that the sooner I do it the better."

"Well, sir, it's real friendly of you, and I hope she'll make a good wife, and that you'll treat her kindly. But I do assure you, sir, that it is not my wish nor my intention to disgrace my daughter by staying at home. No, sir, a clerk I was once, with three pounds a week, and therefore a gentleman. But I've had that knocked out of me long ago, and now I'm only a common loafer and tramp, except when I'm on my clearin' in Oregon, and the whisky bottle's most always too much for me. She sha'n't blush for her father, sir. Not after the first go-off, after I've had to own up. Tell me, sir, does she think much about the Fortune? Does she want money sent home to her to keep up her position like her poor mother?"

"No, she does not. She believes—or did believe until the other day—that you are dead, and your Fortune all lost, or fallen into wrong hands. The loss of what she did not expect will certainly not grieve her much—not half so much as to learn that her father, of whom she has learnt to think so tenderly, is a man who—finds a whisky-bottle most always too much for him."

The man hung his head like a school-boy receiving reproof.

"Yes," he said, "I mustn't stay at home. That's a fact. Can't I go over this morning and have it out with her, and go away again?"

"No," George replied with energy, "you cannot. It is one of the conditions I make with you. You are to stay here quietly, for a week if necessary; you must not go out unless I go with you. You must not make any attempt at all to speak with her. Do you promise?"

The man hesitated.

"If you will not," said George, "I will make you put on again those disgraceful clothes—I will give you a bottle of whisky, and turn you into the road; you can then drink yourself blind drunk and stagger off to find your daughter, and make her have you marched off to the station as a drunken vagabond."

The man shuddered and trembled.

"I will do," he replied, "whatever you tell me."

"Very well then. Stay at home—here—until I come

ack. You may smoke a pipe all day long if you like, but there is no drink. Do you promise?"

"Yes, sir; I will do what you order. I wouldn't shame the little maid."

"Very good. But just tell me what you did it for? What was the good of deceiving her about your success?"

"Well, now"—he had grafted a kind of American drawl upon a full and rich cockney twang, the result of which gave a peculiar flavor to his speech—"well, now," he said slowly, "put it to yourself. Here is a child at home taught to believe her father a lazy and idle fellow with no smartness. Her mother taught her that, likely. Here's a father a good many miles away who wants that child to stick out her chin like girls who have pride in their parents, as some do, not only in Standford Hill, but also Tottenham, and many other places. Nothin' makes a girl proud and haughty, and therefore happy, as being sure she's got a great and noble father. I remember them in church on a Sunday morning, their father being perhaps an alderman, and perhaps a common-councilman. What does that father do? Twice a year he borrows a sheet of paper, and on the Sabbath when the rest are asleep or playin' monty, he sits and writes to that daughter letters which shall make her proud and happy. Do you call that, sir, doin' of a parent's duty, or do you not?"

George did a very unusual thing that morning. He asked for a week's holiday, and was granted it.

He began his week by a very busy and important morning. First, he had a long conference with Mr. Richard Ambler, in which many things of interest were considered and action resolved upon.

"Remember," said the solicitor, "you have to protect Milly against the real man as well as against the pretender. And suppose the real man wants to sell her houses and pocket the money?"

"He will not," said George.

"I do not know. Perhaps he will not be tempted. As for Reginald, leave him to me. Professor of Astronomy indeed! But what is the use of fooling poor Reginald? And to think that not one of us suspected the fellow! Now go, and lose no time. We have the rogue safe

enough, but I do not know yet if we can proceed against him criminally."

"At all events, he stole the notes."

"Yes, yes, but it was in Oregon, and perhaps they might ask to whom these notes belonged; on the whole, it is a tangled business. He has attempted to defraud in instructing me to sell the property; but in doing this he injures not me nor his daughter, but the rightful owner, who is this man, Montoro himself, and from your account I should say he would not be a likely man to become a prosecutor or give good evidence."

"The limpest weed of a man you ever saw," said George.

In the evening George came home. His prisoner had been asleep most of the day, and had obediently kept within the house.

"Very good," said George, "I will now reward you."

He took him out, and walked in the direction of Veritas Villa. At this time, in these summer evenings, the Discoverer's family were generally in the garden playing lawn-tennis. This evening they were all on the lawn together, Milly with them, playing. There was only a low wooden paling over which one could easily look without the appearance of curiosity or impertinence.

"There," said George, "is your daughter. Not the little girl with the glasses; she is only fifteen, and Mr. Ambler's daughter. The taller girl. Look at her well. In a day or two you shall speak to her."

The man looked his best. When George, a few minutes later, drew him away, the tears were running down his face.

"I see," said George, "that your story is true. You are really Milly's father. But I was certain of it from the beginning."

CHAPTER VII.

TILL TO-MORROW.

THE next morning George greatly astonished the inhabitants of Veritas Villa, by paying them a visit in the morning, a thing never known before. He explained that, as he had a holiday, he thought he would just look round

see them. His cousin Réginald was in the map-room? would go there.

He found the Discoverer, aided by Copernica, spectacles on nose, busily engaged in cataloguing books, looking through letters, rolling up maps, and between these labors making notes for that great inaugural lecture which was to revolutionize astronomical research, in America first, the old world next. It was already a voluminous mass of notes—the Philosopher belonging to the school which thinks that the longer they make their utterances the more likely they are to be listened to. In the same way the scholars of the Renaissance used to believe that the bigger their books the more certain would be their immortality. And there are not wanting poets of this century who also believe that the more they write the better they will be loved and preserved, and their memory kept green. As for novelists, they do not count, because nobody ever supposes that a picture of life can be bought worthy of preservation—lucky those who get read by their own generation.

“Come in, come in, George,” cried Réginald cheerily. Here we are, hard at work—hard at work. I expect we shall have to sail in a week or two—as soon, that is, as we can sell off our sticks and get rid of the house. I am giving my inaugural lecture. This, George,” he added, with great seriousness, “is the most important piece of work, I am convinced, that I have ever yet been called upon to do. In it I have to strike a note, such a note as shall be at once an alarm and a message of Truth, and an echo”—he did not explain how an alarm could be all these things—yes, and shall re-echo through the length and breadth of the land—from the North Pole to the—to the mysterious ice caverns of the Outer Rim. A college class, George, is a very serious thing, it is a sacred thing. I may regard my own as a collection of empty vessels waiting to be filled, or as so many canals which have to irrigate a thirsty country, or as so many springs of Truth. Ought we not, myself and Copernica, who shall be my assistant lecturer, to consider ourselves as instruments appointed for the reading of Truth, or even prophets?”

Copernica blushed and gasped, and adjusted her spectacles.

“Ought we not, I say——”

"You certainly ought," George replied, rudely interrupting. "But, Reginald—I will not stop your work many minutes—are you quite sure that it is wise to build upon this offer, to jump at the conclusion that you ought to accept it, to be so certain of going?"

"Why, George," the Discoverer smiled, "as regards the wisdom of the step, I may be allowed to be the best judge; as regards the certainty of going, I have already accepted the offer."

"Yes, yes; but, Reginald, are you quite sure"—here George looked confused—"that it is a genuine offer?"

"Genuine offer! What do you mean, George? The offer is made by Mr. Montoro himself—by Milly's own father. Surely I can trust Milly's father?"

"Yes, I believe you can trust Milly's father."

George could not help saying this.

"When he offers me such a post, what can I do but accept with gratitude?"

"Why," George replied, "it is ungracious to look a gift horse in the mouth, but I think, if I were you, I would first find out where the college is."

"It is in Nevada, near the city of Colorado. I know where it is."

"In Nevada. Yes, yes. That is a long way off. Would it not be prudent first to get the prospectus, papers, calendar, or whatever the college has got to prove its existence?"

"Now, George." Mr. Ambler was really annoyed at this appearance of distrust. "In Milly's father's hands I am quite safe. 'He is bound to us,' he kindly says, 'by bonds of gratitude,' though Heaven knows Milly has done ten times as much for us as we have done for her. It is all quite settled. I have told Cousin Dick to have my Funds sold out, and placed to my credit in the bank. When we get out, Mr. Montoro is going to invest the money for us at ten or twelve per cent. Think of that, after a beggarly three! Milly is going with us." George started. He had not quite realized what this meant. "Going too. We shall be quite a family-party. George! What are you swearing for? and what are you banging the table for?" Because George suddenly remembered that he had only the night before agreed to intrust Milly to this villain's care for two years.

"George," said Copernica, frightened, "don't look like that. What is the matter? Because Milly is to go away for two years? Oh, for shame!"

He made a desperate effort, and controlled himself.

"I want you seriously, Reginald," he said, speaking calmly, "to consider the possibility of your not going at all."

"I cannot."

"Oh, George," said Copernica, "when he has got the chance at last of spreading the Truth all over the world."

"He can spread the Truth just as well—better even—from Veritas Villa," replied George cruelly. "Reginald," he repeated, "you must renounce this project."

"What! and give up my professorship?"

"Why, George?" asked Copernica. "Why is he to renounce the project?"

"Because—because there is a very good reason, but I cannot tell you to-day."

"If there is a good reason," Copernica insisted, "all the more reason for telling it at once."

"No. But think, Reginald, what would the place be to you even if it were all that has been represented to you? An obscure college, in a new, far-off American town, a place where your voice would not reach beyond the walls of the lecture-room with its half-dozen students. Call that an opening? Why, here in London you address the whole world. Everybody looks to London. Things said and written in London go over the whole world. You are at the head of a society, growing"—here he stammered, but held on bravely—"growing daily and rapidly in importance. You know that they are afraid of you at the universities. If you were in America you would be out of their way; they would fear you no longer. They ask for nothing better than your removal. Mr. Montoro is playing into their hands. As for your society it would fall to pieces, and your theories would be set aside, and speedily forgotten, while you were eating out your heart in obscurity. It would be exactly as if you had never lived, while, after your death, some one would take up your ideas and steal them, and bring them over here and pretend that they were his own. But here you live like a king—like a king," he repeated mendaciously. "You control the scientific world, you keep your trembling op-

ponents in perpetual terror; they are obliged to have recourse to every kind of disreputable dodge which you defeat; they try to close one avenue, you open another. This incessant activity frightens them; it confounds them; they never know on what side they are next to be attacked. Consider this, my dear Reginald."

"George," murmured the girl, "you don't mean it. You have never talked like this before. If only you meant it, you would be a Recruit, and the best we have ever had."

"I mean every word," he replied, though he felt that his name ought to have been written Ananias—"every word I have said. And as for you, Copernica, instead of crying out upon me for being unkind, you ought to be backing your father up, and making him feel that his right place is where he is sitting, in his wooden chair in the map-room at Veritas Villa, ready to fight with all comers."

"But what does it mean?" asked Reginald blankly. "Tell us only what you mean."

"I cannot to-day. But I will tell you to-morrow morning. Meantime, for Heaven's sake cease to build your hopes upon this project!"

"As for the honor of Mr. Montoro——" Reginald began, but stopped short, because, to his amazement, George began to clinch his fist, grind his teeth, jump about the room, and show all the external signs of wrath which can be only appeased and satisfied by the kickings, whackings, and free fights of the good old times.

Some day—we may not live to see it—we shall return to that excellent method of our ancestors. There are many men with whom one would like to have it out "en champ clos." I should, myself, enormously enjoy contemplating my enemy after I had taken the conceit out of him with a battle-ax.

This entanglement with Reginald Ambler was difficult to understand. What did the man want? To get them all out in America away from their friends, and to rob them? It must be that. Or was it possibly pure devilry and wanton mischief? Not the latter, certainly. The Colonel was not at all the man to perpetrate such a gigantic hoax. One may imagine Theodore Hook doing such a thing if he had got the chance and it occurred to

him; and how he would have made a song about it, and how they would all have laughed over their punch in the delicate and feeling manner of their time at the fine situation of the broken-hearted enthusiast. But not the Colonel; he did not desire to laugh—had not laughed, in fact, for something like twenty years, that is to say, ever since he began to live on his wits. Those savages of Ceylon, who never laugh, and only begin to smile when they are defunct and ghosts, live on their wits, which accounts for their melancholy. What the Colonel was contriving was pure rascality and robbery. In order to set up his gaming-saloon in the best style he wanted as much money to begin with as he could command. And he saw his way to getting a good large haul out of Reginald Ambler. However, George said no more, but left them abruptly. Then Copernica burst into tears, and threw herself into her father's arms.

"Oh, papa dear, what is it? what does he mean?"

"I do not know, child. How should I know? Is George gone mad?"

No; she shook her head. George was certainly not gone mad.

"There is something behind," she cried; "George does not talk at random. Oh, what is it?"

"I would stake my life," said her father shortly, "on Mr. Montoro's honor. Why—is George silly? Here comes home a man who has been so busy for twenty years making a great Fortune that he has never even had time to come home before; he is changed, of course. No one expected in a rich millionaire the manner of a clerk, which he was before he went out. Everybody says he was once a very meek and humble creature. He isn't now. But so rich and successful a man can afford to be a little overbearing. He comes home, then——"

"Father," said Copernica desperately, "we may go on talking till to-morrow morning, when George is to tell us what he means. Talk as much as we like, we shall get no further forward. Shall we try and make believe that the whole thing is a dream, and that we shall not go out at all, so that we shall feel the blow less?"

"I can't, my dear," her father replied. "I think I must go out to America or somewhere else and have my say, or choke. Here no one will listen to me."

"They wouldn't listen to Galileo."

"I wish they never had. But as for me, I must speak. And this is my only chance."

"To-morrow morning—let us wait till to-morrow morning. At any rate, papa dear, if the worst were to happen—that is to say, if we could not go—we should be exactly the same as we were before Mr. Montoro came. But, oh, it is impossible!"

"It is impossible," said her father, trying to feel the confidence of his words; "George has got a bee in his bonnet. Many chemists get bees in their bonnets. Let us go on with our work, Copernica. Let us lose no time. The college must find us prepared."

But his hand shook, and his brain was troubled. For there was a thing which he had not told.

On the morning before, Mr. Montoro had held with him a last conference on the subject of the college and the chair; he gave him a paper of instructions how to get to Colorado, showing what would be the cost of the journey, the time taken, and the best way there. It was a paper calculated to carry conviction to the mind of the most suspicious, even a Yankee lawyer. In fact, there is nothing which one man cannot persuade another to believe if he gets him quiet and away from his fellow-creatures. In the smoking-room of a club, for instance, nobody believes anybody. In the retirement of the Discoverer's map-room, the Colonel's lies, ingeniously constructed, were accepted without the least suspicion.

"And now, my dear friend," said Mr. Montoro finally, "I think we have settled everything. I cannot tell you with what satisfaction I look upon the fact that we have secured you for our new college. The possession of genius in our Professorial Chairs is, above all, the great thing wanted for a new institution. Oh yes, to be sure, I had almost forgotten. About your own money matters. Have you arranged them?"

"I have written to my cousin, who manages my affairs, to sell out my stock and pay the amount to my account in the bank."

"Yes; that is well. We can get you better interest across the water. How are you going to bring it with you?"

"I do not quite know," replied the philosopher, who

had thought of tying it up in gold, and so bringing it in his pocket.

"Let me advise you," said Mr. Montoro. "If you are sure you can quite trust me—actually trust me—I will pay it into my own account, giving you a note or receipt for it, which will make you quite safe. You can give me a check payable to bearer, and I will save you all further trouble about it."

This was a perfectly faithful promise. He fully intended to save Mr. Ambler and his family all trouble about the money for the future.

He then sat down and calculated the cost of the journey, with a margin; he was very particular about the margin, so as to allow ample room, he said, for possible emergencies. This done; he subtracted the total amount from the sum lying to Mr. Ambler's credit.

"There," he said pleasantly, "it is a real comfort for me to be of a little assistance as a practical man to a Genius and a Philosopher. Draw me the check, payable to bearer—so. When did you order the sale of the stock? Yes, I do not think the money will be paid to your credit till the day after to-morrow. Then I should think—but that matters nothing to you. So, sign the check—Reginald Ambler. Shake hands, my dear friend. I believe firmly that you will always consider this as the very luckiest day in all your life. Courage! The way of glory lies plain and clear before you. Of glory? Ay, and of wealth and success to your boys. For I shall take care of them all. Yes, I charge myself with them."

It was the memory of this check and what it might mean, because the poor man knew nothing about stopping checks, that lay on the Discoverer's conscience as heavy as lead.

George sought Milly, who was, if one may confess a thing which should not be a cause of shame, in the kitchen making gooseberry jam. This is a conserve favorably regarded by the youthful palate, and is cheap. To the adult who is picksome, the jelly of Siberian crab, which is soft and silky to the palate—as they say of claret and of tea—is preferable, and so is the preserve made of blackberries, which is full-flavored and fragrant, yet fresh from the wood.

"Milly, my dear," he said cheerfully, though he was oppressed with the thing he had to face, "you look delightful in a white apron, and your fingers are so sticky that you are defenseless."

"George," she said demurely, "did you stay away from business on purpose to kiss me?"

"Not quite, dear child. On the contrary, I have a great deal to say to you. First of all, I have made my cousin Reginald miserable, and Copernica as well."

"Oh! But why?"

"Next, I am going to make you, not miserable, but full of wonder. My dear Milly, a very strange and most unexpected thing has happened. I do not think I ought to tell you to-day what that is. Indeed you must not hint or let fall the slightest suspicion that anything at all has happened."

"Has it anything to do, George, with—with—with my father?"

"A good deal, Milly. But ask me no more."

"Yes, tell me; is it anything against him? I told you, George, that I do not love him as I ought to love my father, but——"

"But his honor is a sacred thing, Milly. There is nothing against your father's honor that I know of. Yet remember that Mr. Montoro does not know that, and must not be told, or allowed for a moment to suspect, until to-morrow."

"It looks like conspiring against one's own father; but I do not expect that he will come here to-day."

"It is not that, Milly, as you will see to-morrow. It is conspiring for him."

"George, I do not understand in the least. To-morrow! Why, he is coming here to-morrow, to meet Mr. Richard about the sale of the houses. Oh, my poor houses! I am so sorry they are to be sold."

"I don't think they will be sold," said George.

"And to-morrow I am to drive about London, to buy fine things for my outfit."

"Perhaps you will not take that drive," said George mysteriously.

"And I had a letter to-day from my aunt Paulina. She has not seen me for four years, but I told her, when I wrote last, that my father had returned, and she is coming

here to-morrow to see him. 'Congratulate him,' she says, 'on his splendid success, and we shall always be pleased to see him, and you with him, at Wimbledon.' "

George laughed.

"I am glad your aunt is coming. It will be another agreeable surprise for your father. Does he know?"

"No, he does not. I only got the letter this morning. He has always declared that he does not desire to see any of his relations."

"Shall you send him the letter?"

"Why," said Milly, "my father has never even told me where he is staying."

"I can tell you that, if you want to know. Stay, I will tell you to-morrow."

"George, you are most mysterious. Tell me, is this a bad thing that has——"

"No, not a bad thing. It is such a good thing, Milly, that had it not happened"—his face darkened—"I would have wished you lying dead and buried in the graveyard, and myself beside you. Oh, my dear," again he clinched his fist, and looked like one who thirsts for another man's blood, "it is such a good thing that we shall have to go in humble gratitude for it all the rest of our lives."

"And I shall leave it to-morrow? Why, George, what can it be? It is not money—nothing to do with money would make you wish me dead. And you say that it does not affect my father's honor. Why, what can it be?"

"You shall learn it to-morrow. But for to-day, Milly, can you trust me?"

"Why, George dear," she said, throwing her arm round his neck—it was not true that her fingers were sticky—"George, if I cannot trust you; whom am I to trust?"

"Then, my darling, obey me for exactly four-and-twenty hours, and I will obey you for all my life to come. Listen, my dear."

He whispered.

The effect of that whisper could not be equaled even by the gallery in St. Paul's Cathedral. Milly blushed, and then turned pale; first her eyes looked startled and frightened; next, they became soft; first she opened her mouth, and gasped; then her lips trembled, and gradually settled into a smile.

"George," she said, "do you mean this?"

For reply he drew out a document and showed it to her. She read it through and blushed again. It was a formal document, the nature of which became evident to her after the first few words of preamble.

"But I sail the day after to-morrow."

"Do you think, my dear, that I am going to let you go?"

"But what am I to say? Oh, George, what will my father say?"

"He will approve—he will consent; and yet you will not go to America with him."

"Oh, I am in a dream!"

"Do you consent then, my dear?"

She gave him both her hands.

"Yes, George, only tell me what to do."

"You have only to come to my rooms to-morrow morning at ten. Bring Copernica—poor little maid!—with you, and say nothing—not one word—to any one, my dear. I cannot rest for thinking that you are not yet under my protection. Only one day more to wait. You cannot be carried off in one day."

"Who is to carry me off, George?"

"There is only one man, my dear, who would try, but he is possessed of many devils. Kiss me, and trust me, and say nothing."

All that day there was a restraint at Veritas Villa, and an uneasy feeling that something or other was going to happen. Copernica went on with her task of cataloguing, but without heart; the Discoverer continued to sit before the notes of his inaugural lecture, but somehow his enthusiasm was, for the moment, quenched. He even fell into one of those fits of despondency which sometimes, but rarely, filled his mind with the blackness of despair, because at those times a mocking voice asked him how it was that he could never account for a lunar eclipse. What should he say, when his class asked him how, on his system, he could produce an eclipse of the moon?

"Father," said Copernica at length, "it is no use trying to work. George meant something—he never talks idly; but let us put the things away and go for a walk." She took her father to the banks of the river, where they wandered in a mood of settled gloom. The child tried to raise her father's spirits by pointing out the many

proofs of the earth's flatness which could be gathered from the prospect around them. In fact anyone who contemplates the Wanstead Marshes long enough cannot fail of arriving at the conclusion that the earth is as flat as a pancake. But the Discoverer remained dejected. Was the cup to be dashed away from his lips at the very moment of fruition? Was he really to go on in the old half-hearted way, making a Recruit now and then, courting contempt, being held up to ridicule? And then—the recollection of that check lay at his heart. Yet if one could not trust Milly's father, in whom was trust to be placed?

To-morrow—to-morrow he was to know.

One person remained to be prepared. This was the unfortunate Johnny. George took him in the afternoon to see his old haunts. They visited together the places which he had known in the old days: the cottage where he brought home his young wife, and was happy before the sister married into carriage company, and the baneful passion of envy was aroused; the church where he once held part of a pew; the tavern, where there had been a club, to which he went once a week, when there was a sing-song. Johnny—whom it is impossible to call Mr. Montoro—shed tears in thinking of that weekly sing-song. Then they took train—in the old days it was an omnibus—to the City, and gazed at the exterior of the house where he had once been a clerk. When the man's heart was thus softened with the past, George began to prepare him for the morrow.

“I have kept you a prisoner all this time,” he said, “partly for your own sake. Tell me, what would happen if you had met the Colonel in America?”

“I should have shot him,” he replied. “Oh yes! I know I should have shot him; I felt exactly like shooting him.”

“If you were to meet him here in England, what would you do?”

“There would be a fight,” he said courageously. “Yes, I think—I'm most sure there'd be a fight, because I'm bound to call him a thief, and the Colonel is not a man likely to stand that—you lay your last dollar he isn't. So there must be a fight, you see.”

"It would be a poor sort of a fight," said George.
"Well, suppose you heard that the Colonel was calling himself by your name——"

"What'd he do that for?"

"Suppose he went to Mr. Ambler's house and said he was Mr. Montoro, and that Milly was his daughter, and sold her houses, and told her to go over to America with him."

"With him! Go with him!" The man became pale, and trembled in all his limbs. "The little maid go with him!"

"That is exactly what he has done."

Then Johnny began to swear. Mild as he was, he had learned to swear after the manner of the American rough and rowdy. He swore at the Colonel so terribly that George thought he would have some kind of fit. He swore so long that George thought he would never finish.

"Come," he said at length, "if you hadn't already sworn enough for ten men, I would ask you to say it all over again for me. Now, I warn you, to-morrow you will meet that identical villain. What are you going to do?"

"Why," Johnny replied slowly, "he hasn't got the little maid, has he? 'T would be very different if he had. And he hasn't got the money for them houses, has he? So, mister, I think, as I'm a peaceful man, I shall kind o' let him go. The Colonel's a terrible man to fight. It's a great thing to be peaceful—kind o' gets a man on in the world."

"Yes," said George, "you are a beautiful example, are you not?"

"But," said Johnny, "about them notes. Yes, I am afraid there may be a fight."

Poor Milly! Her luck in fathers was very bad. George wondered which of the twain, on the whole, was the more undesirable. Difficult to honor either of them—and there is an old-world prejudice that it is better to be a sturdy rogue than a coward. If the Colonel was a rogue he was sturdy. If Johnny was indifferent honest, he was a most dreadful coward.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHO GIVETH AWAY THIS WOMAN?

"I KNEW," said Copernica, when Milly asked her to put on her hat and go for a walk with her, "I knew that something would happen to-day, and I knew it would be something to do with you, because George was in it. And it will be something to do with Mr. Montoro, because papa is in it. Yes, Milly dear, I will be ready in a minute. As for poor papa, he has not slept a wink all night, but walked about groaning, and this morning he is sitting all of a heap-like among the boxes. And, oh, good gracious, Milly! you've got on your white frock and white gloves. What in the world——"

"Come," said Milly, smiling; "you shall know in half an hour as much as I know myself. Why, dear, as to what it all means, I know no more than you. But something has happened—something which is to make us grateful all our days, George says, and to-day we shall learn what it is."

"But, why white frock and white gloves?" Copernica persisted. "It is like a wedding."

"Yes, dear," Milly blushed, "it is terribly like a wedding, is it not?"

First, they went to George's lodgings. This was in itself a remarkable thing, because George should have been at his business. But he was not, he was standing at the garden-gate waiting for them. With him were two gentlemen—one of them Copernica's cousin, Mr. Richard; the other, a strange man—not a gentleman, exactly, to judge by his look, which was downcast and shy, as if he was dressed in a suit of clothes too good for him; and really, when Copernica, who was sharp of observation, brought her eyes to bear upon that stranger's dress, she became conscious that he was dressed in George's clothes, which made her feel as if she was in a dream. She was certain of it—quite certain of it—she knew the pattern and recognized the cut. Who was this strange man, who must needs borrow a suit of George's clothes? Had he turned

up with nothing to wear? And when he lifted his head and looked round him—in a furtive, ashamed kind of way—the child's brain became suddenly troubled, because he reminded her of somebody—she knew not, for the moment, who it could be. This more than ever made her feel like being in a dream.

This uncanny ghost-like feeling may be arrived at any day by walking about the streets of London at twilight, when you just catch a glimpse—no more—of the faces as they pass, and find your mind presently filled with odd fancies and vague, sorrowful suggestions. You have seen—you remember when they have passed you—faces which reminded you of dead friends. The procession of London faces is endless; as one grows older the streets become more and more filled with the faces of the dead; so that one thinks sometimes that this marching in the procession beside the living may be one form of purgatory; and one trembles to think that if we were to grow very old indeed, the procession of faces in a crowded street would be wholly composed of dead men. To this girl, the face of the strange man suggested likeness to some one, a feeling of having seen it before somewhere; and it made her uncomfortable. George did not introduce him to them; took no notice of him; and merely nodded to him when he said that it was time to be moving.

They formed a little procession. George and Milly went first; Mr. Richard and Copernica came next; and the stranger followed behind, saying nothing, but hanging his head with every appearance of great dejection.

It was only a part of the general mystery and strangeness, and, therefore, it did not in the least surprise Copernica that they walked all the way to Hackney Church, and went up the steps, observing the same order.

But in the porch of that great square Saratoga, or traveling-trunk, which does duty for a parish church, George stopped and said:

“Milly dear, I thought you would like to be married in the same church as your father and mother.”

“Ay,” said the stranger in a low voice, “it was in this very same church, twenty-one years ago. And Matilda in pink.”

Then Milly was going to be married. That was one of the things. But why? And where was her father? And

George looking as serious as if he was going to a funeral. At weddings people ought to laugh and be happy, she thought, being as yet young and ignorant, and not thinking that from weddings spring most of the ills which do afflict humanity; such as a lean purse, a nagging tongue, household troubles, sick children, bad sons, disappointing daughters, distraction of peace, abolition of comfort, and many others. It is true that there is the chance of great blessings; such as—— But they are known to everybody, and at the outset we all expect them, and mean to have them, and shape our course accordingly. But what, Copernica wondered, what in the world did this mysterious person mean by saying, “Matilda in pink”? Who was Matilda.

Then they went into the church. There were already assembled the People, represented—as is the way with the People on state occasions, because they are all busy outside, toiling and moiling—by their elected and trusted functionaries, the verger and the pew-opener. And a curate was in the vestry putting on his robes of office.

They walked up the aisle and stood before the altar, and presently the clergyman came out of the vestry, and took his place, book in hand, and began the service. The words echoed mockingly in the great empty church. Copernica would have cried had not at the very beginning the stranger dressed in George’s clothes begun to snuffle and to shed tears, which made her ashamed of being in his company. Why should he cry? What business had he with the wedding at all? She would have liked to whisper her opinion of this conduct to her cousin Dick Ambler, but he looked as serious as George, and bore himself as if weeping strangers in other people’s clothes belonged to every wedding, like the dreadful old skeleton which was always present at the feast, though it was good manners to take no manner of notice of it.

Another wonderful thing. When the clergyman asked, “Who giveth away this woman?” the stranger it was who officiously stepped forward and performed this duty which Cousin Dick should have done, and he did it, too, with a most indecent choke and gulp, murmuring irreverently, “You bet I do,” which is not in the prayer-book. And then to the end of the service he never took his eyes from the bride, who regarded him not at all, and seemed

not to know that he was present, being wholly occupied with the overwhelming fact that she was being swiftly converted into a wife. She had her heart's desire—not quite in the way she had expected, which was a way of festivity and good wishes, but she had her desire. Therefore she ought to have been happy. But, oh, what would her father say? And what about that promise to go with him for two years? Yet George assured her that her father would actually consent. Why, how could that be? But she was married, the ring was on her finger, and the words were said; yet she was afraid—a girl on such an occasion wants to have her spirits kept up by the gathering of her friends; no one likes to be married in an absolutely empty church; it was like some uncared-for creature to be married with no one to support her except Copernica, and even her own father not present.

When they went to the vestry to sign the strange man came with them, and signed his name after the bride, but she did not read his signature.

Then the ceremony was complete, and Copernica fell into the bride's arms and kissed and hugged her.

"Oh, Milly, Milly," she said, "what does it mean? Are you to stay while we go away without you? And what will your father say, and what will he do? Will he take you away with him just the same?"

"What should he do?" interposed the stranger huskily. "It isn't for the likes of him to carry sweet maids away to America. Don't you take on, miss. He never meant it. Not for one minute did he think of doing such a thing."

"Come, Milly dear," said George; "you have got to listen to a little story before you go home—I mean, before you go back to your old home. Your home is with me now, thank Heaven! You will come too, Copernica. It is a strange story, not very terrible, but it might have been."

So they all went back again. There was no wedding-breakfast prepared, no champagne or drinking of healths, or wishing of joy, or throwing of rice, or looking up of old shoes. Not at all. They went silently into George's room, and stood looking at each other, and especially at the stranger, whose face betokened the most painful shame and confusion.

"Now," Mr. Richard said to him, "you have got something to tell us and something to confess. Try to tell your story straight through if you can. You had better begin at once. Milly, sit down and listen. We will all sit down."

They did so, leaving the unfortunate man standing before them just like a culprit schoolboy.

"I s'pose I must begin somewheres," he said feebly.

When this man was a clerk in the City he used not to say "somewheres," but "somewhere." He had lost, among other things, the art of speaking correctly, and now spoke as his companions for so many years habitually spoke. It is terrifying to think that any one of us, under similar conditions, would probably experience the same losses, and come, in time, to speak like a Cockney coster or a Californian rough.

In spite of the respectable clothes he wore—Milly herself now perceived with wonder that they were borrowed plumes—the poor man had so dejected and hang-dog a look that one felt sorry for him. But by this time she quite understood that something more unexpected even than her own wedding was to happen, and now she connected this walking Mystery in George's tweeds with the unexpected, than which, as we know, nothing is more certain.

"When I went away," this mysterious person began slowly, and as if feeling for his facts, "I thought, being a fool and inexperienced, that if you wanted money all you had to do was to go to America, where you would be sure to find it. Everybody, I thought, got rich in the States. It was only the trouble of going there and pickin' up the dollars. Lord! what a fool I was! Don't none of you believe it. America's the biggest fraud out. If anybody gets rich it's the Americans themselves. You've got to work there harder than at home. If there's any easy places they're grabbed by the natives. Look at me. I gave up three pound a week to go out and make a Fortune. Did I ever get that three pound a week again? Did I ever get another easy place? Don't you think it?"

"Isn't this," asked Mr. Richard unfeelingly, "rather a roundabout way of beginning?"

Copernica looked from Milly to the speaker, and back again. Strange, he was like Milly!

"Thank you, sir," the man replied humbly. "I'm

comin' round to what I want to say. Lemme go my own way, if you please. 'Though if you've a better way, tell me that way, and I will go that way."

"You shall go any way you please," said George, "if only you'll get to the end somehow."

"Thank you, sir," he replied, "you are the only man as has said a kind word to me for twenty years, and I'm bound to please that man if I can"—he kept looking at Milly furtively—"especially since he's husband of the little maid," Milly started. "Very well, then. Hard berths I got, not easy at all. Sometimes it would be porter's work at a store. Did I expect when I gave up a most gentlemanly desk to go rolling casks of treacle? Did I expect to load the steamboats with wood? Did I go out there to do odd chores around, a day's work here, and another there, with a spade and a hoe, or a crowbar and a hammer? I've been a navvy on a railway; I've dug graves for a cemetery; I've cut wood and stacked it. All the hard jobs I had to do, while the natives spread themselves out around the stoves and put up their feet. That's the way they reward a man who gives up three pound a week to go out to them; that's the kind of Fortune they let him make; that's the kind of friend America is—a dollar and a hef a day and leave it if you don't like it: there's plenty of tramps on the road will take it; that's what I gave up my berth for; that's what Matilda"—Milly started—"my wife, Matilda, sent me out for—said I was bound to be ambitious. Told me I ought to soar."

"George," said Milly quickly, "who is this man?"

"Wait a moment, dear. Go on, if you can," he said to the speaker. I suppose we shall get to something in time. Patience, Milly dear."

"I know who he is," said Copernica, nodding her head.

"I am sure I know. He gave her away. Oh, I see now!"

"Well," he continued, "at first I thought this was only the beginning—kind of a rough, hearty, free and easy welcome to new comers; presently I should get the hang of things, and then I should begin to make that Fortune. By this time I was as ambitious as Matilda could ha' wished, because I wanted badly to get back that three pound a week with store clothes and a stove-pipe hat. Then, I concluded she'd be the least mite anxious about

me, and so I wrote her a letter. And just to make her mind easy and to prevent her from falling into one of her tempers, which she certainly would have done if she'd known I was just then rollin' molasses, tyin' up sugar, heavin' logs, and countin' candles, I just told her I was soarin' already to unexpected heights, and the dollars comin' in wonderful. No country, I wrote, like America. She wrote back, by return post, that I was to send all the money home as fast as I made it. I said 'twas all wanted for the big business I was carrying on, and bounced the more because I saw she was ashamed of having thought me such a poor weak creature. The more I bounced, the more she was ashamed, and kept a waitin' to come out, and bring the little maid with her."

"George," cried Milly again, "who is this man?" But George made no reply.

"I know who he is," repeated Copernica; "I am certain I know. 'Matilda was in pink.' Oh, I know."

"When a man begins to lie, it seems kind of impossible to go back on himself; so I kept it up, and when Matilda died, I carried on the same tale with the little maid, whom I can't believe to be grown up so tall and handsome, and married before my very eyes."

"George," cried Milly for the third time, and springing to her feet, "tell me, who is he?"

"My dear, he is your father—not the other man at all. This is your father."

"Yes, my dear," the man repeated humbly, "your father, and you are the little maid as I've written so many letters to, and told so many lies about the Glorious Fortune."

"I said I knew," Copernica murmured. "Her father; but I wonder who the other is. You can't have two fathers."

"My father!" A month before Milly would have jumped into his arms first, and remarked his hang-dog look and poverty-stricken appearance afterward. But I suppose there is only a limited amount of what may be called the impulse of affection in the human heart. At all events, her own did not leap up at all, nor did she show any signs of joy, but held her husband's hand more tightly, looking at this colossal American failure, the man who

had been twenty years wriggling at the lowest depths, and could never wriggle any higher, and she repeated with much more wonder than joy: "My father!"

"I am, indeed," he said. "I would have liked to come home in silks and satins and gold rings, but I never had any luck. I would have sent the little maid all the money she could wish if I'd had it. But I hadn't got any to send."

"George," cried Milly, "if this is my father, who is—the other?"

"The other, my dear, is a—— what you shall presently learn."

"But—but I have kissed him, and I was going away with him."

"You were," replied Mr. Richard, who, to his honor be it said, had been witnessing the proceedings with more than professional interest, though the morning's work would certainly be charged in the bill. "If it had not been for this discovery you would have gone with him. Fortunately we are in time to save not only you from this danger, but also your fortune from destruction."

"He must be a rogue and a cheat," Copernica said in a low voice. "Then all he told us and all he promised us were lies. O—h! But I knew who this one was directly he began to speak. And this is what we were to learn this morning. And George knew it yesterday."

"My darling," said George, taking his wife's hand, "you understand now why I wanted to marry you at once. If it rains fathers they cannot harm you now or take you from me. As for this one, I think he will not try to harm you. He is very different from the other. To begin with, he quite understands"—George shook his left forefinger in the direction of the man as if he were a lecturer in a show and pronouncing a discourse upon a giant, a dwarf, or a monster—"he quite understands that, after the life he has led, the way he came home, the habits—the habits, I say"—the stranger groaned and nodded gloomily—"he has contracted, the companions he has been among, the very language he has learned, and—and—and everything, it can no longer be considered reasonable that you either owe him any obedience, or that he has any claim upon your affection. Besides, he has practiced a most cruel and heartless deception upon you." The returned Fortune-

hunter shook his head in the deepest self-reproach. "The most he can ask of you will be your forgiveness. As for staying on here, that, of course, is out of the question——"

"Quite," said Johnny. "Oh, quite! I know it."

"He has been among rough and common people so long that he would feel unhappy in a respectable English house."

"That is so," said Johnny.

"He has got, he tells me, a very comfortable clearing out in the Western States somewhere, with a house upon it, and—and, I suppose, what is wanted to live comfortably."

"Don't forget there's a whisky-bottle," said Johnny, not boastfully, but as one who wishes to make a completely clean breast.

"You see," George went on, that one fact illustrating the manner and customs of the man, without need of further revelations, "he has a whisky-bottle."

"When you've got that," said Johnny, "you don't want anything else," again not boastfully or ostentatiously, but meaning to deliver himself of his own sentiments, and show himself to his daughter, in one full confession, the man he really was.

"Oh, good gracious!" said Copernica; "nothing else!"

"So that," George continued, "he has agreed and promised me, in point of fact, to go away at once—this very day—and get back to his cabin and his clearing in Oregon, as fast as he can. I do not think he can get away much further from us than Oregon, which is on the other side of the Rocky Mountains. And when he is really back again in his own clearing, we shall be very glad to hear from him—occasionally."

But Milly's heart softened.

"If you are really my father," she said, holding out both her hands, "who used to write me such loving letters, you should have something more to say to me, now, than farewell?"

He took her hand, and then timidly bent and kissed her forehead.

"My pretty," he murmured, "I'm not fit to be your father. I doubt whether you ought to ha' let me kiss you. I am only what your husband says I am. But I meant

well. I did indeed. And they were a great comfort to me—them letters.”

He said no more, but his eyes—those foolish, helpless, and wandering eyes—filled with tears and ran over. This natural emotion was sufficient excuse to his daughter for his shambling speech and ungrammatical expressions. When had the other man shown the least emotion?

“Milly,” said Copernica in her quick way, “I suppose you’ll come home with me if it is only to break the news and help unpack the maps again. How my poor father will ever get over it, I don’t know. Mother will be pleased, I think. She never greatly took to the plan, and I think she’ll be pleased to stay. But there, mother, you see, doesn’t much believe in my father’s wonderful discoveries. As for the boys, they must just stay where they are—poor fellows! Well, I should be sorry to think that poor Tycho was going out to roll molasses tubs, and Kepler to load up a steamboat with wood. As to the people,” she added vindictively, turning her glasses full on the people referred to, “who go abroad and come home again without the common decency of being rich”—the returned pauper blushed—“all I can say is that they’re quite as bad as other people who come home and pretend to have colleges, and not half so pleasant, while they last. What,” she snapped at him so fiercely that he jumped, “what did you go away at all for, then?”

CHAPTER IX.

HIS CHRISTIAN-NAME.

THE map-room of Veritas Villa was stripped of everything. The maps and charts were rolled up, the sections showing the Polar Sea and the confines of the great Outer Rim, the drawings, drawn from the Scriptural accounts, the pictures made up from travelers’ accounts, the books, all of which were astronomical, were taken down and packed in black boxes, locked up, fastened with rope, the Professor’s name on them in white—Professor Ambler, Passenger for Colorado, viâ New York. Only the notes for the inaugural lecture remained, because the Discoverer intended to touch up, beautify, and make perfect the in-

augural lecture during the journey. The notes were therefore neatly stitched together and placed in a little portfolio made on purpose for them by Copernica, out of millboard and white silk, the title being in crimson and gold, and the sun, moon, and stars, which floated on the cover, being in blue. It was beautiful and soul-inspiring even to look at that white silk portfolio, and to feel what an Evangel of Astronomical Truth it contained, and how fortunate were the Americans of Colorado State in getting such a Discoverer to reveal such a discovery. He sat—the Philosopher—among the boxes. He should have been triumphant, because he was going to get what he had prayed for all his life; but there was a cloud upon his brow; he was anxious. George's warning words weighed upon him still.

His wife sat with him. To her this breaking up of the old home, where her children had been born, where they had all been so happy, so anxious, so full of love, fear, hope, joy, sorrow—all the things which go to make life a thing always felt, if not always enjoyed, made her profoundly dejected. To be sure she could not believe that they were really going.

"Reginald," she said presently, and after a long silence, "is it real? Are we to have an income of a thousand a year?"

"You doubt still, my dear. To be sure, you have doubted always."

"Not your cleverness, Reginald; but I could not understand how you alone could be right, and all the wise men wrong. Forgive me, husband."

"It matters nothing," he replied grandly; "the faith of the whole world will strengthen your faith too."

"But, George, my dear—what did George mean?"

"I don't know what he meant. What he said was silly. Why, he tried to make out that I should do better by staying here. Staying here, where I have had to undergo every kind of contempt! What does George think about that? It seems to him a light thing for a man to be held up as a laughing-stock. They have called me a madman, they won't answer my letters, they quote me as one of the enthusiasts who ought to be locked up, they whisper if I get into a train; and if I go to church——"

"You never do, dear."

“No; because when I do I hear them whispering as I walk up the aisle: ‘There is the madman, or the fool, or the ass, who teaches that the earth is flat.’ Do you think that is pleasant for me to hear? And then the Society does not increase. Bagshott is very good, he talks about Truth prevailing; but Truth doesn’t make a start. The office-boy says that no one has called for six months, and there have been no letters for three. The office might as well be shut. Bagshott says he will remain at home and circulate the journal, which I shall be able to fill once I get a hearing. Why, out there, oh, wife, I shall have a hearing at last!”

He sprang from his chair and walked about, swinging his arms and sending his coat-tails flying—a sure sign of the deepest emotion.

His wife threw her arms round his neck.

“My dear,” she said, “it is sad to me that our home should be broken up. But what matters anything if only you get the recognition which is your due?”

“Ah,” he continued, “we shall begin a new life with an honorable position, an official and recognized position which must command—I say, my dear, command; hitherto we have begged—the attention even of old-fashioned astronomers. Oh, wife, do you not think I have felt the ignominy of my life which I thought was going to be so glorious? Fifty years old next birthday, and nearly thirty given to the Great Discovery, and Error still taught in every school, though I have never ceased to lift up my voice. Here, what hope have I? But there!—oh, there! with young and generous hearts, unprejudiced, open to reason, what future awaits me there!”

He stopped, clapped his hand to his eyes as one who is dazzled by the prospect, and sat down. His wife listened and sighed. She had never before, perhaps, so fully realized her husband’s position and enthusiasm; she sighed because the thought would intrude itself that something safe in the City would have been worth all the glory that science can confer. This is the way with mothers who have a large family and a small income; they would at any moment actually sacrifice all the immortality about to be conferred by a grateful posterity on their husbands in return for a solid income; they think that there is nothing in the world like domestic ease, comfort, and a good house

allowance; nothing like bringing up the boys and girls well, and giving them a good start in life. If that great man, their father, cannot do that, why, a thousand pities that glory and an income do not go together! Perhaps the reason why the children of great men do not often become themselves great is that the family income would not allow of the first elements of greatness being properly taught.

"The boys like the prospect," said their mother, dubiously. "We could not go without them, but Tycho is getting on so well; and we have such good reports about Kepler."

"They will get on better, under Mr. Montoro's patronage. Everybody gets on in America; the Americans welcome Englishmen; they give them their best things; they smooth the way for them to get on. Mr. Montoro says so, and he ought to know. Look at his example. My dear, I have always been a republican, I believe. It will be a congenial atmosphere." He threw out his arms as if to breathe the stimulating and bracing air of a Republic. "It is only under such a government that Prejudice vanishes and Truth can win her way. You will see very clearly that in astronomy the great heart of the American people will soon beat true and sound."

Just then Copernica appeared. She was returned from the wedding. Her cheeks were flushed, her eyes red, and the traces of tears lay upon her spectacles. She stole in like a guilty criminal, and sank upon one of the boxes in a fine unstudied attitude of despair.

"Papa," she said, "we may begin to unpack our boxes at once." She jumped up and began to untie the cords with feverish haste. "Let us put back the maps and books, and go on as we used to. There will be no going to America."

"Copernica, are you mad?"

The Discoverer turned pale and trembled.

"I am not mad," she replied. "In a little while you will hear all. It is enough to make one mad, but I am in my senses."

At this moment the Benefactor himself appeared with a white rosebud in his button-hole, a white waistcoat, and brand-new hat and lavender gloves. No one could look richer than Mr. Montoro. Perhaps he overdid the part. Very rich men, if I may generalize from a limited field of

observation, generally wear shabby hats and are careless about their gloves. But at Veritas Villa they were not close observers. At sight of him, so glossy, so well groomed, so prosperous and sleek, so confident and so brave, the Philosopher recovered heart.

But his wife caught Copernica by the hand, and watched, her suspicions fully aroused.

"I shall not keep you long, Professor," he said, smiling. "All goes well with the preparations? The day after to-morrow, Milly and I shall be on salt water. Your cousin is coming here at twelve to complete the sale of my little property. He told you?"

"Yes, yes," the Professor wiped his brow—all would be well, surely. "Yes, Dick said I was to be in the way. To be sure, I am always at home."

"It is a bore," said Mr. Montoro, "that one cannot take a house and sell it as one sells a horse. The affair has been dragging for three weeks, and every week means loss when one's concerns are so vast as mine. Money, my friend, even the richest of us cannot afford to lose, and yet I believe I have lost more by the delay than if I had given the houses away. Milly will come with me, after we have finished, to complete her outfit in Regent Street."

"Why," said the Professor, "this little girl of mine came running in five minutes ago, crying that we should not go to America at all."

"Nor more we sha'n't," said Copernica doggedly and idiomatically.

Mr. Montoro's eyes flashed.

"What does the girl mean?" he asked.

"We shall not go to America," she repeated.

Mr. Montoro hesitated. What did she mean? It puzzled him. At this moment he had not the slightest fear or suspicion of danger, yet the girl's words troubled him. What did she mean? In his pocket was the check for the whole of his victim's fortune. In a few moments he was to receive the produce of the sale of his houses which were not his to sell. In another day he was to start for America, taking with him the girl whom he proposed to employ as a confederate and a decoy.

The moralist may pause to remark that the whole of this villainous scheme had grown up bit by bit from the

robbery" of the notes and the letters. Thus does one ill weed produce another, till the whole garden is overrun.

"Of course you will please yourselves about coming out. But I thought you had accepted my offer, Mr. Ambler."

The coldness of his tone frightened the Astronomer.

"Of course I have accepted," he hastened to make submission; "of course I have accepted. Why, the child is mad! I do not know what has possessed her this morning. Don't be offended, Mr. Montoro."

"And yet we shall not go," repeated this amazing girl.

Just then, at the stroke of twelve, Mr. Richard Ambler arrived, bearing his bundle of papers. With him were Milly and George.

It was remarked by Mrs. Ambler that Milly bestowed no greeting upon her father. She, too, exhibited outward and visible signs that something had happened. Her father, however, seemed to observe nothing.

"Now," he said, "let us finish the business."

"Your business," replied the solicitor, "shall be settled in a very few moments."

He stood at the table, the papers in his hand, at the right of the Discoverer, who sat in his wooden chair, looking on with troubled eyes, because things were going on which he understood not. On his left stood Mr. Montoro. Behind the solicitor was Milly, George standing beside her, and in the window Copernica and her mother. Then there was a hush while Mr. Richard read over his papers.

"I must trouble you, Mr.—ah!—Mr. Montoro," he said, "with a little business first. I have received your rents for a good many years. I have here a complete statement, with vouchers of the receipts and disbursements for years."

"I don't want to see it," Mr. Montoro replied. "I really have not the time to look into these trifles."

"A hundred and eighty pounds a year, or thereabouts," said Mr. Richard, "is not a trifle. But if you will not examine the account, you will not perhaps object to give me a discharge in full of all claims. My cousin, as you know, has received the whole income, after paying ground-rents, repairs, and my own charges, for the maintenance and education of Miss Montoro."

"Let us sign this discharge and get on," said his client.

He took the paper offered him and wrote his name at the end of the form—"Charles Montoro."

"Thank you," said Mr. Richard. "Only, pardon me, in legal documents it is necessary to sign the name in full. Is this your only Christian name?"

The effect of these words was wonderful. For suddenly the man remembered the rambling talk of Johnny in his cabin about his ridiculous Christian-name. He had forgotten to find out what it was. He changed color and glanced round him like a wild creature at bay. In the grave face of the solicitor, the angry looks of George Ambrose, and the cold eyes of Milly he saw that the game, somehow, was up.

"We will have both your Christian names, Mr.—ah!—Mr. Montoro."

"Both my names?" He seized the pen again. "Give me the paper back. I am to sign here, am I—and in full? Very good. Milly, my dear, were you ever told your father's ridiculous Christian-name?" Milly made no reply. "Do you know it, Mr. Ambler? I think I would bet you five dollars that you do not know it."

"I do know it," said Mr. Richard. "The point is, that you do not."

Mr. Montoro threw down the pen and tore the paper across, with a remark about the Christian-name which is generally expressed by a long black line.

"Tell me, if you please, what this means?"

"It means many things. But, first of all, is it not an unusual thing for a man to forget his Christian-name? You may learn yours by looking at the register in Hackney Church, where you were christened and married. You are welcome to that information. Did you ever know a case in which a man forgot his Christian-name?"

"This is a most extraordinary proceeding," said Mr. Montoro, recovering his coolness. "Is there anything more to follow? Milly, are you——" She turned her head and made no sign of hearing. "Is this a conspiracy, in which my own daughter is concerned? Are you in it, too, you driveling old idiot?" He looked so fierce as he addressed the Discoverer, who jumped in his chair, and was seized with a mighty terror.

"We are all in it, except Mr. Ambler," said George.

“In that case,” Mr. Montoro replied with dignity, “there is nothing for it but to set the law at work. You, sir,” he addressed Mr. Richard, “will have to give an account of your management; part of the plot, I suppose, was to say nothing about it. Your share,” he addressed George, “was the house property. Yours,” he addressed Milly, “was to aid and abet your lover. An ungrateful and unnatural daughter.”

“Go on,” said George; “my turn will come directly.”

“I have nothing more to say,” Mr. Montoro replied, taking his hat. “So far as I am concerned this is the last time I shall speak with anybody in this room. The law shall take its course.”

“By all means,” said Mr. Richard. “First, however, George, you wished to tell the man what we know about him.”

“I will tell Reginald in his presence,” said George. He took up his position at the door as if to bar escape. “This man, Reginald, is not Charles Montoro at all—he is an impostor and a pretender—his real name is Percival Brooke West; he was once a gentleman, and in the army, but sold out many years ago, after the Crimean War; he then lived about town, gambling and throwing away his money. Fifteen years ago he got into a mess, and did something—I know not what—something disgraceful. Then he was obliged to fly, and was expelled his club. He went to America, and has lived on his wits, that is to say by cheating and gambling in various forms. He met Milly’s father in Oregon, robbed him of his money and his daughter’s letters, and came to London. He now lives at the Langham Hotel under his own name. No, sir, you stay until I have finished. If you try to get out before we let you go, you will have to fight me.”

The Claimant folded his arms, and tried to look unconcerned, but he failed, because he was totally unprepared for this. How on earth had they found it out? As regards the Christian-name, that was an accident caused by his own carelessness; he ought to have foreseen this danger; it was a most foolish thing to forget. But the array of facts—how had they got hold of them? And he remembered, too late, what he had at the very outset proposed to himself, namely, to rush the thing through, and be off before any questions could arise. Better, far better,

had he not been tempted by this dream of gambling in its higher branches, with a beautiful woman to help him. Better had he been contented with the plunder of Milly's houses, and made no attempt upon the poor astronomer. But he had his check in his pocket that moment. When he got away he would drive straight to the bank: perhaps it would not be too late.

"You see," George concluded, "you are known."

"I see," he replied, "that you have conspired together to make up a story. Now, if you please, we will conclude this scene. But do not imagine that I am going to let you have my property."

"One moment. We shall not keep you much longer." George opened the door, and admitted the lawful owner of the name of Montoro. "You know this man, perhaps."

"Oh," said the Colonel, "you have got hold of Johnny, have you! That explains it. So you made your way home, Johnny, did you? Now I understand it all, and I suppose the game is up."

"Colonel," said Johnny, with a show of courage, "give me back my money and my letters."

"As for the letters," the Colonel took out his pocket-book; here they are; I have no longer any use for them. As for the money, it was no more yours than mine. You have now got your cabin and your clearing. Be content with it, unless you prefer to stay at home with the most dutiful daughter in the world, and the most delightful son-in-law. They will be as charmed with your personal habits as you will be with the young man's manners. You were made for each other."

He tossed the letters across the table. Johnny seized them, and crammed them into his pockets.

"Can you tell me your Christian-name before we break up this meeting?"

"They baptized me Worshipful Charles," said Johnny.

"Colonel, don't keep all the money."

"Worshipful Charles!" the Colonel repeated. "Now, Mr. Richard Ambler, could any one guess such a fool of a name as that? Worshipful Charles! It's enough to turn any man into such a Johnny as this poor creature. Milly, you will learn to love your new father more and more the longer you know him. He is as brave as he is truthful;

he is as warlike as he is clear-sighted; he is as temperate as he is resolute; he hates whisky as he hates the sin of falsehood; and he is as rich as I am myself. As for the houses——”

“Matilda’s houses,” said Johnny; “they’re the little maid’s now, not mine at all. Colonel, don’t be hard on a man. I’m a peaceful man, but don’t keep all them notes.”

“Peaceful! Good Lord!” cried George. “Is there a single kick in the whole man? He robs you of your money, he tries to rob you of your daughter, he has almost robbed her of her little fortune, and you call yourself a peaceful man.”

“It pays best,” Johnny replied. “I’ve got through life comfortably through being peaceful, with lots of fighting men, stickers and shooters, around all the time. Colonel, say you won’t keep it all.”

“Good Heavens!” cried George again, “why, you ought to give him in charge. You should follow him to his hotel, and go with him wherever he goes until he gives you back the money.”

“That is what you would do, my fine fellow,” said the Colonel. “I wish I had you out in the West, I would make you dance, my cocky little clerk with the bantam crow.”

“And I, Mr. Brooke West, would make you hang.”

“Hush! You don’t know,” said Johnny. “Oh, you don’t guess what it is to fight a man like the Colonel. No, no, speak him fair. You will find him very good company, too,” he added without much fitness as far as anyone could tell. But doubtless in his mind there was some sort of connection.

“There are difficulties, Mr. Ambrose,” the Colonel went on. He was quite easy and comfortable in his manner now, having made up his mind that it was quite useless to carry on the game any longer. “There are difficulties which you do not understand. Our gallant and daring friend Johnny, or Worshipful Charles, claims some money. He must first prove that he lost that money; next, that I took that money; and thirdly, that it was his money.”

“I found it,” said Johnny.

“A very likely story. Now, is there anything more you wish to say, Mr. Ambrose, or any of you?”

At this point the Great Discoverer, who had been listening in an abject state of confusion, bewilderment, and terror, began to realize something of the situation.

“George,” he pointed to the new comer, “who, after all, is this gentleman?”

“This is Milly’s father, Reginald. Do you not understand?”

“The place in his college has been offered to me. He knows that, I suppose?”

“Oh, papa,” cried Copernica, “there is no college—there is no Fortune. This poor man is a beggar and a pauper; all that was said about the Fortune was false, wasn’t it, you Mr. Montoro?”

He shook his head.

“All lies,” he replied.

“Oh!” the Discoverer sprang from his chair and literally hurled himself upon the Colonel. He was not a fighting man, but his whole thought was not to let him go; therefore, he threw his arms round his neck and hung on. “Hold him—keep him from running away!” he screamed. “He has got a check for all my money—all my money—in his pocket—all my money!” he really shrieked in his agony, thinking that he had made his wife and children penniless.

“Let him go, Reginald,” said his cousin; “let him go. Your money is safe.” They dragged him, crying out for his money, from his enemy. “Your money is quite safe. You see, cousin, I naturally thought when you sent me instructions to sell out, that you were up to some foolishness, so I took the liberty of delaying the business. Your stock, my poor cousin, still stands to your name, and your check is worthless.”

“Richard,” said Mrs. Ambler, who had been looking on with an earnest desire for all to go away, so that she could begin to make things as they used to be—“Richard, I shall be grateful to you for my whole life.”

“In that case,” said the Colonel, adjusting his rosebud, which had been slightly bruised in the struggle, “in that case, let us tear it up.” He took it out of his pocket-book and did so. “And now, I am afraid there remains nothing but to unpack your boxes and put up your maps

again. But you have my free permission to quote my case as that of a Recruit won over by force of reason and argument. If I can flatten the earth a little more for you in any part of it, I shall willingly do so. Nothing more, I think?"

"Richard," said Mrs. Ambler, "please make Reginald's money so that he can never touch any of it again."

"Except a criminal prosecution for conspiring to obtain money under false pretenses," said Mr. Richard.

"Yes, that I fully expect. This witness," he pointed to Johnny, "will be invaluable to you, will he not? Good-by, Milly; I wish you, for your husband's sake, your mother's temper—good-by."

"Good Heavens!" said Mrs. Ambler, "we were within a day of being beggars. Oh, Copernica!"

He put on his hat and was about to go, when the door opened and a lady of middle-age, very stout, and extremely dignified in her bearing, dressed in gorgeous silks, appeared.

"Where," she said, looking round the room, "is my brother-in-law, Charles Montoro?"

"Your brother-in-law, madam?" asked the Colonel. "Is Worshipful Charles your brother-in-law? Do you mean the rich, the successful—the enormously rich and successful Worshipful Charles Montoro?"

"Certainly I do. Milly, my dear, is this gentleman your father? He does not look——"

"Behold him! Come Johnny." The Colonel seized the man of peace, who had shown, at sight of the new comer, a desire to hide himself behind Mr. Richard, and dragged him forward. "Your sister-in-law—perhaps Matilda's sister who married into carriage company."

"Oh, Lord! It is P'leena," said Johnny looking horribly guilty.

"My dear Aunt Paulina," Milly stepped forward, "there has been a very great mistake. My father has not made the great Fortune we all thought he had. He has failed and is very poor, in fact he is going back to America, where he has a small farm. All our plans are changed, and I was married this morning to George Ambrose."

"No Fortune? No money made? You a pauper,

Charles?" the lady grew very red. "Explain this deception, pray. Milly, I demand an explanation."

"It is P'leena!" Johnny repeated.

"There is none to make, aunt, except what I have told you—my father is not rich."

"I have driven all the way from Wimbledon to be confronted with a Pauper!" said this amiable lady, "after what I have been given to understand. And you, Milly, have actually married without consulting me, your only respectable relation! Pray, what is your husband?"

"I am a clerk," said George unblushingly.

"Henceforth, Milly," said the outraged lady, "go your own way. You have no more ambition than your father. A Pauper!" She withered the luckless Johnny. "It is enough to make my poor deceived, unfortunate sister Matilda turn in the grave into which you have worried her. After all that has been done for you, Milly, you marry a clerk!"

She walked out, and the next moment they heard the wheels of her carriage driving her away.

"This is very amusing," said the Colonel. "I congratulate you, Johnny, on your reception by your friends. Nothing like the domestic affections, is there? Now I am going. My cab is outside. Would you like a lift to town, Johnny, just to talk about those notes? We shall agree very well together, once we get away from mischievous pettifoggers and greedy clerks."

Johnny followed unresisting. He could not resist the Colonel. He did not even say good-by to his daughter, but went without a word.

Milly expected her father to return that day, and the next, and the day after. Then George went to the Langham and inquired. Mr. Brooke West was gone, and nothing was known of any Mr. Montoro. What happened was very simple. The Colonel drove his friend Johnny to Wapping, or the neighborhood. There he gave him dinner, with copious whisky. He then found out a steamer going to sail to New York the next day. He persuaded Johnny, without the least difficulty, that his only chance was to get back to Oregon with all speed, lest somebody should take possession of his clearing, and that

ten pounds, as an advance, would quite cover any claims he might have on account of that bundle of notes. He nursed Johnny all that day, keeping him happy with whisky and amused with continual talk. In the morning he took him on board, and did not leave him until the last bell rang and the last visitor had to descend the companion. In fact, he was the last, and as he went down, Johnny was feebly hanging over the bulwarks, waving his hat in a friendly farewell. Never was such a Johnny known.

I believe that he is now sitting by himself in the shade beside his cabin, listening contentedly to the murmur of the stream, and regarding through the door with sentimental admiration a distant view of the whisky-bottle on the table.

As for the Astronomer, it took him many days to recover even the semblance of dignity and self-respect. He was crushed; he did not dare to face the boys, who were reduced to mere rags of despair and wrath. Copernica took her father to the seaside at Walton-on-Naze, where he amused himself by considering the flatness of the ocean, and so gradually pulled round. He has now entirely recovered, because he has made converts of two ladies—sisters—with money. They are convinced that he is not only right and a very great Discoverer indeed, but also that he is mentioned in Prophecy, and will be connected with the end of the world. They talk of leaving him all their money for the purpose of disseminating the truth. He has begun a new chapter on the flatness of the earth, and has promised a Speculation on the Outer Rim. Sometimes, however, the healed wound breaks out afresh, and he remembers with shame and sorrow how he was cajoled and deceived, and how he was ready to part with the whole of his fortune to an unscrupulous adventurer and cheat.

I ought to leave the Colonel to his own devices. In novels he would have gone back to America, there to lose all his ill-gotten money on euchre and a black bottle; after this he would have become once more adventurer, sportsman, and card-sharper; and he would have been finally hanged for horse-stealing, or shot for cheating at

monte. I beg to explain that Mr. Percival Brooke West did nothing of the kind.

Johnny dispatched, he sat down to think.

First of all he had not done so badly since he had managed to get into his little gambling circle. The stolen eight hundred pounds had increased to more than a thousand, without deducting his personal expenses. And he felt that he could not possibly return to the old life. And then he remembered that he had a mother and sisters.

They lived by the seaside in a pretty cottage—a widow woman and two elderly daughters. They are quite well-to-do people, and until the autumn of this year of grace, eighteen hundred and eighty-three, they lamented continually the absence of the son and brother who had turned out so badly, and been so “extravagant”—that is how they put it; but though they knew nothing for certain, they were aware that there had been more than extravagance.

One morning in September the prodigal came home.

“Mother,” he said, “let us have no talk of the past. I have had time to sow my wild oats. I have saved, at the expense of many privations and great resolution, a small sum of money to come home with. Let me stay a little while with you and my sisters before I go back to the struggle.”

He had grown his gray beard again, looked quite gentle and humble, and spoke so kindly that their hearts were melted.

Let him stay? Will they ever let him go? And if a tiger be well fed, regularly fed, and kept warm, and given all that he wants, that tiger, in course of time, will become, if you please, a mere tame cat. He will undergo this transformation without any repentance, tears, remorse, sorrow, self-reproach, penitence, or lamentations of a sinner, but comfortably, gradually, and smoothly. In course of time, Mr. Percival Brooke West will, I dare say, inherit his mother’s property. He will not return to town, where his late reception inspired him with a dislike for Clubland, but will remain in the country, and will become an authority on whist; he will be popular among many as he grows older, on account of his strange experiences and his varied stories of travel and adventure; and though in course of

time there may come into the country rumors of wild youth and excesses, followed by trouble, no one will believe that he was ever anything but an honorable gentleman, with as fair a record as falls to the lot of most, though perhaps he lost his money, and had to go abroad for a time to make more.

But Milly and her husband abide by the banks of the gentle river Lea, and are contented, and he hopes to do such great things in the future as will lead him to the gate of honor and the way of wealth.

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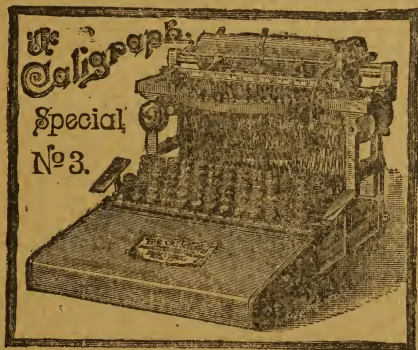


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478 Diavola; or, Nobody's Daughter. Part II.....	20	76 Wife in Name Only; or, A Broken Heart.....	20
480 Married in Haste. Edited by Miss M. E. Braddon.....	20	79 Wedded and Parted.....	*
487 Put to the Test. Edited by Miss M. E. Braddon.....	20	92 Lord Lynne's Choice.....	20
488 Joshua Haggard's Daughter.....	20	148 Thorns and Orange-Blossoms.....	20
489 Rupert Godwin.....	20	190 Romance of a Black Veil.....	*
495 Mount Royal.....	20	220 Which Loved Him Best?.....	20
496 Only a Woman. Edited by Miss M. E. Braddon.....	20	237 Repented at Leisure. (Large type edition).....	20
497 The Lady's Mile.....	20	967 Repented at Leisure.....	*
498 Only a Clod.....	20	249 "Prince Charlie's Daughter; or, The Cost of Her Love.....	20
499 The Cloven Foot.....	20	250 Sunshine and Roses; or, Diana's Discipline.....	20
511 A Strange World.....	20	254 The Wife's Secret, and Fair but False.....	*
515 Sir Jasper's Tenant.....	20	283 The Sin of a Lifetime; or, Vivien's Atonement.....	20
524 Strangers and Pilgrims.....	20	287 At War With Herself.....	*
529 The Doctor's Wife.....	20	923 At War With Herself. (Large type edition).....	20
542 Fenton's Quest.....	20	288 From Gloom to Sunlight; or, From Out the Gloom.....	*
544 Cut by the County; or, Grace Darnel.....	*	955 From Gloom to Sunlight; or, From Out the Gloom. (Large type edition).....	20
548 A Fatal Marriage, and The Shadow in the Corner.....	*	291 Love's Warfare.....	20
549 Dudley Carleon; or, The Brother's Secret, and George Caulfield's Journey.....	*	292 A Golden Heart.....	20
552 Hostages to Fortune.....	20	293 The Shadow of a Sin.....	*
553 Birds of Prey.....	20	948 The Shadow of a Sin. (Large type edition).....	20
554 Charlotte's Inheritance. (Sequel to "Birds of Prey").....	20	294 The False Vow; or, Hilda; or, Lady Hutton's Ward.....	*
557 To the Bitter End.....	20	928 The False Vow; or, Hilda; or, Lady Hutton's Ward. (Large type edition).....	20
559 Taken at the Flood.....	20	294 Lady Hutton's Ward; or, Hilda; or, The False Vow.....	*
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561 Just as I am; or, A Living Lie.....	20	294 Hilda; or, The False Vow; or, Lady Hutton's Ward.....	*
567 Dead Men's Shoes.....	20	928 Hilda; or, The False Vow; or, Lady Hutton's Ward. (Large type edition).....	20
570 John Marchmont's Legacy.....	20	295 A Woman's War.....	*
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840 One Thing Needful; or, The Penalty of Fate.....	20	296 A Rose in Thorns.....	20
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881 Mohawks. 2d half.....	20	953 Hilary's Folly; or, Her Marriage Vow. (Large type edition).....	20
890 The Mistletoe Bough. Christmas, 1886. Edited by Miss M. E. Braddon.....	20	299 The Fatal Lilies, and A Bride from the Sea.....	*
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947 Publicans and Sinners; or, Lucius Davoren. 1st half.....	20	303 Ingledew House, and More Bitter than Death.....	*
947 Publicans and Sinners; or, Lucius Davoren. 2d half.....	20	304 In Cupid's Net.....	*
1036 Like and Unlike.....	20	305 A Dead Heart, and Lady Gwendoline's Dream.....	*
1098 The Fatal Three.....	20	306 A Golden Dawn, and Love for a Day.....	*
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68 A Queen Amongst Women.....	*		

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322 A Woman's Love-Story.....	20	1195 Dumaresq's Temptation.....	20
323 A Willful Maid.....	20	1285 Jenny.....	20
411 A Bitter Atonement.....	20	1291 The Star of Love.....	20
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470 Evelyn's Folly.....	20	944 The Professor.....	20
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576 Her Martyrdom.....	20	227 Nancy.....	20
626 A Fair Mystery; or, The Perils of Beauty.....	20	645 Mrs. Smith of Longmains.....	*
741 The Heiress of Hilldrop; or, The Romance of a Young Girl.....	20	758 "Good-bye, Sweetheart!".....	20
745 For Another's Sin; or, A Strug- gle for Love.....	20	765 Not Wisely, But Too Well.....	20
792 Set in Diamonds.....	20	767 Joan.....	20
821 The World Between Them.....	20	768 Red as a Rose is She.....	20
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853 A True Magdalen.....	20	862 Betty's Visions.....	*
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1091 A Modern Cinderella.....	*	By the Author of "By Crooked Paths."	
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		By Lord Byron.	
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 538 A Fair Country Maid..... 20

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- 127 Adrian Bright..... 20

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- 445 The Shadow of a Crime..... 20
 520 She's All the World to Me..... *
 1234 The Deemster..... 20
 1255 The Bondman..... 20

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- 1699 The Wing of Azrael..... 20

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- 1583 A Marked Man..... 20

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- 595 A North Country Maid..... 20
 796 In a Grass Country..... 20
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 912 Pure Gold..... 20
 963 Worth Winning..... 20
 1025 Daisy's Dilemma..... 20
 1028 A Devout Lover; or, A Wasted
 Love..... 20
 1070 A Life's Mistake..... 20
 1204 The Lodge by the Sea..... 20
 1205 A Lost Wife..... 20
 1236 Her Father's Daughter..... 20
 1261 Wild George's Daughter..... 20
 1290 The Cost of a Lie..... 20
 1292 Bosky Dell..... 20
 1549 The Cruise of the Black Prince 20
 1782 A Dead Past..... 20

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 half..... 20
 608 For Lillias. 1st half..... 20
 608 For Lillias. 2d half..... 20
 930 Uncle Max. 1st half..... 20
 930 Uncle Max. 2d half..... 20
 932 Queenie's Whim. 1st half..... 20
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 934 Wooded and Married. 1st half. 20
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 936 Nellie's Memories. 1st half... 20
 936 Nellie's Memories. 2d half... 20
 961 Wee Wifie..... 20
 1033 Esther: A Story for Girls..... 20
 1064 Only the Governess..... 20
 1135 Aunt Diana..... 20
 1194 The Search for Basil Lyndhurst 30
 1208 Merle's Crusade..... 20
 1545 Lover or Friend?..... 30

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- 1493 Willy Reilly..... 20
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- 1553 Larry McFarland's Wake.... *
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 1556 The Midnight Mass. *
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 1558 An Irish Oath..... *
 1560 Going to Maynooth..... *
 1561 Phelim O'Toole's Courtship... *
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 1564 Neal Malone..... *

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- 571 Paul Crew's Story..... *

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- 462 Alice's Adventures in Wonder-
 land. Illustrated by John
 Tenniel..... 20
 789 Through the Looking-Glass,
 and What Alice Found There.
 Illustrated by John Tenniel.. 20

By Cervantes.

- 1546 Don Quixote.... 30

By L. W. Champney.

- 1468 Bourbon Lilies..... 20

By Erckmann-Chatrian.

- 329 The Polish Jew. (Translated
 from the French by Caroline
 A. Merighi.)..... *

By Victor Cherbuliez.

- 1516 Samuel Brohl & Co..... 20

By Mrs. C. M. Clarke.

- 1801 More True than Truthful..... 20

By W. M. Clemens.

- 1544 Famous Funny Fellows..... 20

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- 485 Tinted Vapours..... *
 1279 Master of His Fate..... 20
 1511 A Reverend Gentleman..... 20

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- 504 Curly: An Actor's Story..... *

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- 403 An English Squire..... 20
 1689 A Near Relation..... 20

By Beatrice Collensie.

- 1352 A Double Marriage..... 20

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- 52 The New Magdalen..... *
 102 The Moonstone..... 20
 167 Heart and Science..... 20
 168 No Thoroughfare. By Dickens
 and Collins..... *
 175 Love's Random Shot, and
 Other Stories..... *
 233 "I Say No;" or, The Love-Let-
 ter Answered..... 20
 508 The Girl at the Gate..... *
 591 The Queen of Hearts..... 20
 613 The Ghost's Touch, and Percy
 and the Prophet..... *
 623 My Lady's Money..... *
 701 The Woman in White. 1st half 20
 701 The Woman in White. 2d half 20

702	Man and Wife. 1st half.....	20
702	Man and Wife. 2d half.....	20
764	The Evil Genius.....	20
896	The Guilty River.....	20
946	The Dead Secret.....	20
977	The Haunted Hotel.....	20
1029	Armada. 1st half.....	20
1029	Armada. 2d half.....	20
1095	The Legacy of Cain.....	20
1119	No Name. 1st half.....	20
1119	No Name. 2d half.....	20
1269	Blind Love.....	20
1347	A Rogue's Life.....	20
1608	Tales of Two Idle Apprentices. By Charles Dickens and Wil- kie Collins.....	20

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361	The Red Rover.....	20
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379	Home as Found. (Sequel to "Homeward Bound").....	20
380	Wyandotte; or, The Huttet Knoll.....	20
385	The Headsman; or, The Ab- baye des Vignerons	20
394	The Bravo.....	20
397	Lionel Lincoln; or, The Leag- uer of Boston.....	20
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414	Miles Wallingford. (Sequel to "Afloat and Ashore").....	20
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- 574 The Nabob: A Story of Parisian

Life and Manners..... 20

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Doctor Marigold..... *

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- 328 Babiole, the Pretty Milliner.

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- 328 Babiole, the Pretty Milliner.

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	coq. 2d half.....	20
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119	Monica, and A Rose Distill'd..	*
123	Sweet is True Love.....	*
129	Rossmoyne.....	*
134	The Witching Hour, and Other	
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136	"That Last Rehearsal," and	
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166	Moonshine and Marguerites...	*
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284	Doris.....	20
312	A Week's Amusement; or, A	
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342	The Baby, and One New Year's	
	Eve.....	*
390	Mildred Trevanion.....	*
404	In Durance Vile, and Other	
	Stories.....	*
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494	A Maiden All Forlorn, and Bar-	
	bara.....	*
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1009	In an Evil Hour, and Other	
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1035	The Duchess.....	20
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1123	Under-Currents.....	20
1197	"Jerry." — "That Night in	
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	Irish Love and Marriage.....	*
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1453	Her Last Throw.....	20

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	Part I.....	30
262	The Count of Monte-Cristo.	
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717	Beau Tancrede; or, The Mar-	
	riage Verdict.....	20
1053	Masaniello; or, The Fisherman	
	of Naples.....	20
1340	The Son of Monte-Cristo. 1st	
	half.....	20
1340	The Son of Monte-Cristo. 2d	
	half.....	20
1642	Monte-Cristo and His Wife. A	
	Sequel to the "Count of Mon-	
	te-Cristo.".....	20
1645	The Countess of Monte-Cristo.	
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1645	The Countess of Monte-Cristo.	
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1676	Camille.....	*

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